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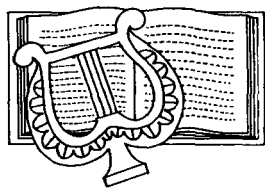
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# Mrs. Brown at the Sea-side.

BY

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN PAPERS."

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THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.



## MRS. BROWN AT THE SEA-SIDE

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EVER since that time as I were, I may say, and no falsehood neither, decoyed down by Brown them eight 'ours at Brighton, I've always set my face agin the sea.

Not as it isn't no doubt a 'olesome thing to some constitutions, tho' I've know'd a many as the verrry smell on it made that bilious as Cockle's wouldn't relieve, nor not even baked lemons as 'ave been know'd to cure the jaunders to my certing knowledge, and all thro' a gipsy 'ooman a-tellin' 'er of it as was a-sellin' cabbage-nets and skewers down the Bagnige-Wells Road, as was Mrs. Orsley's own aunt, as come to answer the door 'erself as yaller as a guinea, and that put out bein' brought down to the door, thro' the gal bein' gone to fetch the shoulder o' mutton from the baker's as were washin' day, and then only to see a tramp with a babby in 'er arms the colour of pickled walnut juice,



as they've been know'd to steep the young nobility in when stole away from their 'appy 'omes, 'as turned up advanced in life and swore to by 'is old nuss thro' moles as she could indemnify, tho' not wisible to the naked eye, but can't be unbeknown to them as 'ave washed 'em in infancy.

So Mrs. Orsley's aunt, as 'er name were Turner by the second 'usband, she come to the door a-speakin' pretty sharp, as couldn't abear the sight of a gipsy thro' bein' brought up in the country as no 'en-roost ain't safe from nor yet a bit of linen as you may put out to bleach thro' likin' it to be a good colour and whipped off the grass in a jiffey by 'em.

So she says, "Go along, you waggerbone," 'uffy like, and slams the door, leastways were a-goin' to, when the gal come up sudden with the bakin' on a tray, as was sent flyin' backards, mutton and all, and a mercy as the 'ot grease only fell over the pot-boy's legs and not 'is arms, as were bare with bringin' round the one o'clock beer, as is a thing as nobody couldn't stand at the wash-tub without by the 'our together, as was the end of Mrs. Malins, thro' 'er legs a-flyin' as will give way when least expected, the same as my Pembroke table as 'ad belonged to my dear mother's mother, and a well-made bit of furniture, but in course couldn't be expected to stand agin two bricklayer's labourers a-standin' on it to whitewash with my back turned

and found it out by the marks of their feet as might 'ave 'appened at meal-time, and a nice smash of everything.

Well, I was a sayin' that gipsy 'ooman she were a forgivin' temper, and told Mrs. Turner about the baked lemons being good for the jaunders as cured 'er entire, tho' a kite's foot for colour to 'er dyin' day, but not no more of them agonies as did use to bend 'er double, and couldn't straiten 'erself for love or money, and took doctor's stuff by the gallon, as I will never believe but that calomel tea as she took wasn't too strong for the stomach, as is a medicine I never did 'old with, thro' never bein' one for drenchin'

So Brown he says to me, "I tell you what it is, Martha, them rheumatic pains of yours would fly like chaff before the wind at the sea-side."

I says, "Brown, I've 'card say as the wind is that wiolent at the sea-side as 'ave been know'd to carry parties over the cliffs as easy as kiss your 'and, the same as Mrs. Peters as went down to Broadstairs along with 'er married daughter and the children, and was a settin' on the rocks with a gig umbreller up thro' the sun bein' enough to pierce 'er brain, and was took clean off 'er legs thro' a 'oldin' on to that umbreller, and carried out to sea with a wiolent squall that sudden as she'd never 'ave been missed but for 'er son a-wantin'

the umbreller as he see a floatin' out, with 'is mother a-clingin' on to it like barnacles, as they calls 'em, to a ship's bottom ; as is the reason why I never fancies mussels, thro' a whole family as were pisoned in the Isle of Wight, as is nothin' but a mask of copperass, as may be easy proved in bilin' 'em down with a silver spoon, as in course they wasn't born with, as the sayin' is, thro' only bein' a labourin' man, as isn't likely to leave no plate in the family.

" So I've always 'ad a dread of the sea, tho' I well remembers Mrs. Enty, as were my brother's aunt thro' marriage, as 'ad bathin' machines at Margate, and was there myself ; for when quite a child, thro' swelled glanders, and did used to sleep in a room with a little 'ouse made of shells on the mantelpiece, and did used to pick up pennywinkles on the rocks for tea by the gallon, but never was in a boat thro' my aunt bein' that timbersome of me a goin' over the side, as wasn't strong on my feet till my wisdom-teeth was cut, as is often the case with them as is put down too soon, pertikler when 'eavy and never a child to crawl."

So Brown says, " Stop it ; I don't want no more of your birth, parentage, and education, but jest make up your mind whether you'll go to Margate or not."

I says, " Not if I'm a goin' to be 'urried and

put upon, as will require three days to get me ready; for," I says, "I shall be fried alive on the sea-side without a cool dress to my back, for I don't believe as either of them muslings as is put away rough dried at the top of the cupboard where I keeps the linen will ever meet round me, besides flounces bein' gone out altogether, let alone seein' whether Mrs. Challin can come to take care of the 'ouse, and Miss Pinkerton, for two days at the werry least, to get my things ready, as tho' not by no means the mantymaker as I should like, yet answers my purpose at eighteenpence a day and 'er wittles, as ain't much of a appetite; for tho' I can't never forget the way as she be'aved to me, yet couldn't but pity when I come to 'ear as she ~~was~~ drove to work for 'er bread, and only twopence 'apenny apiece for making a full-fronted shirt, as is enough to bring a judgment on the slop-shop as she worked for, and should, too, if I 'ad my way with such wile blood-suckers."

Brown didn't say no more but, "Toosday next as ever is, boat or rail as you likes."

So, when I comes to think as this were Friday, I begun to feel as the grass must grow under my feet, so sends the gal off for Miss Pinkerton that werry moment, and, as luck would 'ave it, ketched 'er with 'er bonnet on a-goin' to that slop-shop for to ask for work, bein' drove to it with 'er rent

a-owin', and been livin' on tea and a egg for weeks.

She never was a beauty, thro' a broken nose, with a squint, as come from pitchin' 'eadlong down the kitchen stairs when fust runnin' alone, as there did ought to 'ave been a gate to, or else no peace in the 'ouse night nor day with a young family.

But when I see 'er come in along with Matilda wore to skelingtons, with no more strength than a rat, I was downright shocked; and tho' I'd 'ad my tea earlier that arternoon thro' Brown a-bein' all of a fidget to get out, I didn't pretend to but made 'er a cup, and sent out for a new French roll and a bit of cold 'am from round the corner, as was nice and tender tho' cut low, and she did relish it uncommon to be sure, and put 'er in that sperrits as she set to at once a rippin' that skirt off the pink musling, as is a curlin' shell pattern with a white stripe, as costs me twelve and sixpence in the Boro' Road the summer afore, and would 'ave looked elegant only Mrs. Polling spilte it with 'er beastly cut, as is as obstinate as a pig and as stupid as a donkey over a bit of work.

I could 'ave sworn if I'd been a gentleman, when I see myself fust in that musling as was set in the gethers all crooked and the shells upside down, and because I says to 'er, "If you call that a fit, Mrs. Polling, I don't," bounced out of the 'ouse

a-bangin' the door arter 'er, as tho' 'eaven and hearth 'ad come together, and shook a pane of glass out of the fan-light, as splintered all over the passage, and might 'ave brought on lock-jaw thro' Brown bein' in the constant 'abit o' takin' off 'is boots on the mat, and a-walkin' in 'is stockin' feet to the stairs where 'is slippers is put, as don't like 'em close to the door for fear as he might fall over 'em a-comin' unawares.

I must say as both them muslings looked werry dressy, pertikler the blue, if that beast of a gal as were trusted to smooth it out 'adn't been and done it without wipin' the iron.

I'd got a nice spotted musling pelerine, and when I'd done up my black silk cape as looked like new when washed with a drop of gin, tho' it give it a red shade as I think must 'ave been thro' the iron bein' too 'ot, I was all ready. I thought as I never should 'ave my bonnet 'ome in time as I sent to be cleaned and trimmed up by Mrs. Gorley, as is in that line close by Lambeth Walk, and might 'ave a Regent Street business but for 'er brute of a 'usband as ain't never sober from Monday mornin' to Sunday night, and 'ave took the pledge over and over agin.

I couldn't get that bonnet out o' my 'ead all Sunday a-thinkin' as it never could be ready by Monday night, as Mrs. Gorley 'ad promised me

faithful she'd do 'er very best for to 'ave it, and kep' 'er word faithful tho' past ten when that boy come up to the door with it in a wicker basket as were lined with black glazy stuff.

Well, you know, bein' all of a 'urry I put down that bonnet for the minnit out of my 'and on a chair while I was a-lookin' for twopence for to give the boy for 'isself; and when I come back into the room there was Brown a-settin' on that werry identical chair, 'avin' jest come in a-sayin' as a peg in the 'eel of 'is boot 'ad been a givin' 'im misery all the way 'ome.

I says to 'im, "Wherever did you put my bonnet, Brown?"

He says, "What bonnet?"

I says, "Why the one as the boy 'ave jest brought 'ome;" and then exclaims, "Why, if you ain't a-settin' on it!" for I see the strings a-'angin' down under 'im.

You never see sich a pancake as he'd made on it. I thought as my 'art would bust, and if he didn't say as it looked all the better for it.

I thought wear it I never could, but Miss Pinkerton as I was a-goin' to give a bed to so as to 'ave 'er 'elp early in the mornin', thro' 'earin' me scream come a-runnin' down, and werry soon made it all right, as comes of 'avin' 'em flat shapes, for if it 'ad been my Leghorn no 'uman 'and couldn't

never 'ave made it look decent agin, for Brown must be sixteen stun if he's a ounce as comes 'eavy on a bonnet, pertikler 'im a-throwin' 'isself a dead weight on to that chair with 'is 'eel.

It was past twelve afore either me or Miss Pinkerton got to bed thro' me a-wishin' to 'ave everythink packed over night, and I'm sure my box was as good as new thro' bein' one of them as is covered with paper and a arch top with black iron clamps for to 'old it at the corners.

I took and fresh papered that box inside with newspapers, and covered the outside with a bit of the parlour paper, as is red roses on.

When I'd got in everythink into that box as I were a-goin' to take, it was that full as shet it wouldn't, tho' me and Miss Pinkerton set on it while the gal was a-tryin' to turn the key with all 'er might.

As to Brown, he were a-snorin', and wouldn't 'ave got up not to lock up the Bank of England, as the sayin' is.

I must say as I 'eard that box give a crack while a-settin' on it myself, but wasn't sure, and in the mornin' it seemed all right when we was a-tyin' it up with the clothes-line, but go into the lock that 'asp wouldn't, for all our pushin' and drivin'

So when the cab come as Mrs. Challin 'ad been and fetched I says to the cabman, "Jest be so good



as to put your knee on the lead of this box as won't lock."

He says, "Won't it? I'll soon settle that." And if he didn't take and kneel on it that violent, for all the world like a demented helephant, as will kneel anythink to death, as I've 'eard say, in its fury, and crack went the lead like a rocket a-goin' off.

I says, "You've done for it now."

"Oh," he says, "it don't signify about lockin' it. I'll draw the cords tighter," and so he did, a-sayin' as I might keep my eye on it all the way as we was a-goin' by the boat, as leaves at ten.

In course Brown 'ad gone on fust, and was to meet me aboard the steamer, as I were glad on, for he's such a worret and fidget at startin' as nearly drives me mad. So at last I got off, tho' much flustered, for the door of that cab was that narrer as I never should 'ave got into it, only thro' the cabman a-openin' the oppersite door and a-'awlin' at me while the others prized me up.

I wouldn't 'ave went by it only thro' bein' late, and I must say as the man was that dawdlin' in 'is drivin' as we never should 'ave been in time if I 'adn't let down the front winder and a-kep' on proggin' at 'im in the back with my umbreller, as made 'im forget 'isself frightful in 'is langwidge, as I didn't mind thro' my 'urry to get there, and I

don't think as we 'ad over two minnits to ten when the cab drawed up, and them fellers in their pinbefores as calls theirselves porters come and grabbed the boxes.

I was that flustered as I didn't 'ardly know what I was a-doin', and says, "Margate boat," and no more, and off them fellers rushed, a-carryin' all before them.

I overpaid that cabman frightful, in my fears as they'd been and collared the lot, and away I 'urries arter them and rushes aboard the steamer and dropped onto a seat a-pantin' for breath like a overflowed bird,

When I 'eard a voice esclaim, "'Allo, Martha, where are you off to?" I turns, and sees Brown on board of a steamer as was next door like.

So I says, "Goin' to? Why, Margate, of course."

He says, "If you stops aboard there, you'll be took across the water."

"What!" I says; "kidnapped into foreign parts agin my will? Never!" I says.

So them porters as was aboard the boat with Brown says, "Come on, Missis, step over."

I says, "Over what?"

"Why," says Brown, "get on that seat. Any one will give you a leg up, and you'll be over like a bird."

Well, I ain't one to clamber nor climb in a general way, as is bold in a fieldmale, so I 'esitates; but Brown says, "The boat's off."

So on to the seat I scrambles, and manages to get my leg over the side o' the two boats, for they was a-layin' side by side, paralytic, as the sayin' is.

I 'adn't 'ardly got my leg over 'arfway when the boat begun to move.

I give a scream as must 'ave been 'eard for miles. Brown made a grab at me by the harm. Some one behind give me a shove—friendly, no doubt, but that wiolent as sent me flyin' slap aboard the other boat with that wiolence as must 'ave been my death thro' comin' in collusion with anythink solid; but, as luck would 'ave it, I pitched on to a sailor's back in a blue Jersey, as were a-stoopin' doin' up some ropes, as broke my fall, tho' it's a mercy we didn't both on us roll over into the engines, as would 'ave crushed us to instant death.

I never did 'ear worse langwidge than what that young sailor used, as I says to 'im, "You did ought to be ashamed of yourself a-usin' such expressions afore ladies," I says, "and I wonder you ain't afraid to a-goin' to sea as you are, as is enough to bring a judgment on you, wessel and all, as is a awful thing to think about on the bottomless deep; and," I says, "as to me a-'urtin' you it's down-

right rubbish and fancy, for I'm sure I shouldn't 'ave knocked a fly off."

"Well, then," he says, a-rubbin' 'is back, "it would 'ave been a four-wheeled fly," as set all them idjots a-grinnin', and I was that aggrawated with Brown, as would pay them blood-suckers in pinbe-fores, as I calls 'em, fourpence a package down to the camp-stool and my umbreller, as they took out of my 'and in my fluster, as it is wilful falsehoods to call luggage.

I was that shook by the fall, with my 'ooks and eyes bust out up my back, that I was obligated to go down with the stewardess for to be set to rights.

A werry nice lady that stewardess were, thro' bein' a widder and 'ad buried seven poor things, and all under five years old, as is a 'ard trouble to a mother as will fret for a infant more than p'r'aps is necessary, and not 'eave a sigh over a whole ship load gone to the bottom, tho' in course blood is thicker than water, as the sayin' is.

I could 'ave set all day along with that stewardess as 'ad only rared three out of ten as fine babbies as ever was born; indeed, too fine, and choked theirselves with their own fat, as requires more care than the peeky ones, 'specially in teethin', as is a 'ard trial to any child, let alone their mothers, as 'ave 'ad to walk the room all the night

thro,' as Mrs. Ornby did, and then 'ad 'im grow up to shy a pint pot at 'er, as is artless blackness in any son to turn out that ungrateful to a mother's sorrers, as no soothin' serups won't allay, nor yet launching the gums, as I've know'd give relief; not as it's a thing as I 'olds with, as is apt to 'arden 'em in 'ealin', and 'ave know'd convulsions to set in.

I don't think as ever I did relish anythink more than a bottle of ginger beer, with the least drop in it to take off the sweetness, as won't never squench thirst.

It was ever so long afore I went on deck agin, as was werry pleasant, I must say, with a breeze a-blowin' and the band a-playin' as makes the time pass that agreeable, and werry different to the time when parties was days a-gettin' to Margate thro' goin' in a Hoy, as it were called, and the fust families in the land a-goin' by it, the same as I 'ave 'eard say as Mrs. Wittles' father did used to as were twice Lord Mayor thro' King George the Third a-comin' to the City along with Queen Charlotte, as were remarkable plain and give to snuff, thro' bein' of the German persuasion, and a-settin' with their crowns on their 'eads and knighted 'im on the spot, tho' they do say as it were arter dinner, but didn't prove no joke, for I well remember 'is widder, as were called Lady Blather's to the day of

'er death, and always went to Margate by the Hoy, regular as I can jest remember myself a-seein' 'em in the river, and was run down thro' steamboats a-comin' in as is frightful dangerous, and knocked my dear aunt over the side of a barge, as kept the ferry 'ouse near Erith Church, and was pertikler fond of being a-board on the water, and went to fill the kettle jest as the steamer come by, never 'shinkin' of no danger thro' bein' 'ard of 'earin', and the fust steamer as ever run to Margate and come on 'er that sudden as nobody wasn't aware on in them days, a-comin' so quick and must 'ave been drowned but for 'er gownd a-ketchin' in the rulloek as 'eld 'er up by the 'eel, till she was drawed out with a 'itcher as was kep' for the purpose, but give 'er a shock as she never 'eld up 'er 'ead agin ; not as ever she did, not to say properly, thro' a weak back bone as she'd 'ad from a child ; but as to them Hoys, they was as bad as a man-of-war for sea-sickness I've 'eard say, and nobody went aboard 'em without preparin' themselves for the worst ; and 'ave been know'd to be wrecked off Greenitlic, as is a wild spot on the Essex side, thro' bein' all one mash with hague a-ragin' at every point, as nothink ain't finer for than old port took reg'lar, and bark whilst fastin'

I can't say as ever I fancies the sea myself, and would 'ave gone by the train only it's a savin', and

Brown enjoys 'is pipe with a glass of stout on deck, and is such a man for to go about with, thro' knowin' everythink, for I'm sure all the years as I've been 'is wife I never asked 'im a question that I didn't get a answer; and wherever he gets it all from I can't make out, and was a real pleasure to 'ear 'im talk to them sailors, as I could see quite looked up to 'im jest for all the world as if he'd been a admirable.

I do not 'old with 'avin' of that old wessel a-layin' off Greenwich for a 'ospital, as might be werry well for the drowneded, but so much dampness must be bad for sickness, as I've known even wettin' the boards bring on the harysipilis, and once get that into a sick ward and nice work you'll 'ave with it, as carried off old Mrs. Arbottle in no time, as must 'ave been looked for at ninety-three, as is a great hage one must allow.

There wasn't werry much to look at arter Gravesend, as did used to be the hite of fashion once, and well I remember Alderman Wittles's family as were a drysalter by trade, tho' quite the gentleman, and every Sunday in summer a-goin' to Gravesend, and Mrs. Wittles she doated on srimps, as she'd bring 'ome in a cotton bag, and not a bit of pride about 'er, and was werry much put out with Master Fred, 'er eldest, as give 'isself hairs about bein' seen a-carryin' 'em, and took and 'id

'em in the umbreller, as he 'ad to put up in a 'urry thro' a sudden shower, and nearly drowneded 'is ma with srimps, as some on 'em got down 'er back, and undressed 'er myself the moment as she got 'ome, and never see sich irritation in my life, as was enough to aggrawate any one, let alone the loss of the srimps, as is always a relish, but in course was every one lost.

I well remembers when sea-bathin' was beautiful at Gravesend, and only one peer in the place; and 'ave 'eard say as it was once a lonesome spot enough, where the Ingymen did used to lay off a-waitin' for the wind, as is often werry contrary, but was a good thing for the innkeepers, as makes good the sayin' as it's a ill wind as blows nobody any good, as I'm sure the wind didn't as blowed in our back-washus winder and all the slates off like a pack of cards, a-scatterin' them all over the place; and tore up the water-butt by the roots, as fell on the dog-kennel, and would 'ave killed the poor dog if he 'adn't broke 'is chain 'ours afore, and got thro' the palins arter Mrs. Archbut's cat next door, as was a beastly thief, as he'd pretty soon, 'ave worried to death, only she jumped on the wall with 'er tail like a bottle-brush, a-swearin' at 'im for all the world like a Christian.

But as I was a-sayin', Gravesend was a grand place once, thro' bein' the same as Tilbury Fort, as



is jest oppersite, as was Queen Elizabeth's pallis, where she rode down them Spanish armaders as come agin 'er, as I've seen 'er myself in the Tower of London, as is waxwork, for all the world like livin' death, as the sayin' is; not as she's a woman as Brown can keep 'is temper over thro' callin' 'er a tyrant, as cut off 'er own mother's 'ead, and boxed 'er 'usband's ears for turnin' 'is back on 'er, tho' she never would own to 'im as a 'usband for fear of jealousy, as must 'ave been wild times; and them maids of 'oner as did used to stand round 'er throne with them long pikes, as you may see in the Tower, as they'd run into one another when words run too 'igh, as they will do, and end in blows, as must 'ave been death on the spot wherever they was 'it.

There was a werry nice dinner aboard that steamer, as I calls a biled leg of mutton and a roast line of pork, with summer cabbage and peas, and green gooseberry pies as was that acid thro' a-gettin' nearly ripe; and in all my life I never tasted a better cheese, tho' the reddishes was as big as 'apenny balls, and the lettices run werry much up the middle, as makes 'em all stalk and bitter as sut.

They certingly do 'ave lovely bottled stout aboard them boats, and altogether, what with 'avin' a little somethin' 'ot along with Brown, I never

did enjoy a meal more, not as I altogether liked Brown a-sayin' as I'd been and dipped my beak into 'is grog pretty deep, and makin' parties grin, as is like their manners, as ain't behaviour for to poke your nose into any one else's conversation.

I never know'd till Brown was a-tellin' me as we set on that deck about the new ways as they've got of makin' guns as they was a-tryin' on, as'll carry far beyond the naked eye, as seems werry awful to think on, for you might be shot dead in a instant ever so far off and never know as a gun 'ad been fired within miles of you, let alone never findin' out who done it, as in course is a satisfaction even tho' it should be brought in accidental death, the same as they did about poor Mr. Mackey, as fell out of winder, as is well know'd as she give 'im a shove thro' bein' 'is second, and a wile temper with every-think settled on 'er, but never enjoyed it, for I've seen 'er myself turn that white if ever a winder were alluded to as shows a bad conscience, as she must 'ave 'ad to go and leave it all to a 'ospital, with 'er own flesh and blood a-walkin' about without shoes and stockin', as I don't consider a Christian act in any woman as never did nothink to offend 'er, but that's not my business.

I didn't think much of Urn Bay, as was built by a grocer's widder as kep' the "Goldin Urn" out somewheres over the water and was named

accordin', and speaks well for 'er thro' not bein' ashamed of 'er 'usband's trade.

The sea was a-gettin' a little rubustikle arter we lef' that Bay where some 'ad gone ashore, and glad I was when we run into Margate, as 'arf a 'our more would 'ave upset my apple-cart as Brown called it.

Why ever they stops them steamers so far off the land I can't think, and I says to Brown, "'Ow-ever are we to get the things up all that way?" as said, "They'll be took up on a tramway."

It was 'ard work for me to walk all along what they calls the jetty, and glad I was when we got to the end, leastways should 'ave been if I 'adn't see a sight as took my breath away, for there was my box with the bottom out a-layin' a downright wreck, and lots of things a-bulgin' out, with a odd boot and a 'air brush as 'ad fell out together, as no doubt was all them waggerbones doin' as 'ad brought it up, as kep' on a-sayin' as any one must be a fool to travel with such a box jest as I came up.

I says, "Escuse me, but bein' that fool myself I wants to know what you calls yourself a-de-destroyin' any one's property in cold blood like that, and then a-givin' them nothink but cheek for their pains?"

It's lucky as I'd tied up that box with a extra

clothes line, or there wouldn't 'ave been a westment left.

I got it put on a barrer, and off me and Brown started to where we was a goin' for lodgin's, as was a pilot's widder near the fort as they calls it, but bless you, when we got there, as were a friend of Mrs. Marchmont, as is the corn-chandler round our corner, Mrs. Aslem as were the name, come to the door and says, "I couldn't take in Queen Wictoria, I'm that full."

I says, "But not bein' Queen Wictoria, I do not look to your fust-floor, but one bed-room and a parlour would suit."

She says, "I couldn't give you a turn-up bed under the dresser, nor I don't think as you'll find sich accommodation in all Margate to-night, as is that full thro' fifteen thousand a-comin' by the boats, let alone the rail."

I says, "What fifteen thousand in them two boats? they couldn't 'old 'arf the number."

She says, "I mean since the first, as is now three weeks ago and more."

I says, "Pray tell me where I could get a cup of tea and a rest, for I'm a-droppin' with 'eat and downright parched."

She says, "Believe me or believe me not, I couldn't even ask you to set on the stairs; but," she says, "there's Mrs. Busby as 'ave got a

bed I know if it ain't been took in the last ten minnits."

I says, "Where does she live?"

She says, "Round the corner, close agin where you landed at fust."

So off we starts ; but Mrs. Busby she said she could let fifty beds if she 'ad 'em over and over agin.

I says, "Whatever can be done?"

She says, "I can't say "

I says, "Can't you recommend any one?"

She says, "I never recommends nobody ; but," she says, "there's lodgin's I'm told up 'Igh Street."

I says, "Let's go there," tho' bein' a-droppin' ; and the party as was along with the luggage said as many families 'ad been obligated to sleep in the bathin' machines, and evenin the church—as give me the 'orrors the bare thought on.

I'm sure if we went to one place we went to a dozen, at last we come to some small 'ouses where the donkey-chaises stands in front, and the party as was a-wheelin' the things said as he know'd one 'ouse round the corner, so on we went.

Whatever that party meant by jest round the corner I can't think, for it was a good 'arf-mile if a inch afore we come to the little 'ouse as was a washywoman lookin' sort of a place, but I was that

done as a pig-stye would have seemed a pallis to me.

I never did see a bigger sloven than the woman as come to the door, and I must say as I were put out altogether, for Brown 'ad kep' on at me all the way about not 'avin' wrote afore'and to let Mrs. Murdoch 'ave know'd as would 'ave kep' anythink for us, leastways so she said, not as I believed 'er, and turned out a double-faced character thro' promisin' us the rooms as soon as they was wacant and then let 'em over our 'eads under our noses without a word.

While we was a-talkin' to the woman of the 'ouse at the door, some other parties come a-askin' for bed-rooms, so we was glad to ketch at the one she'd got, tho' the top o' the 'ouse, and bakin' 'ot, just under the slates, as was suffocatin'

I was too knocked up to relish my tea, but arter a bit I felt better.

So Brown and me dawdled down to the sea, and there we set ever so long. 'im a-smokin' and me downright a-dreadin' that bed-room, and not quite comfortable at leavin' all my things in that box with the bottom out in a strange place.

The woman 'ad give us a cup of tea in the parlour, thro' the lodgers bein' gone to Pegwell Bay, but expected 'ome to supper. So, knowin' as we couldn't 'ave a meal there, me and Brown got

some cold 'am and bottled ale at werry nice refreshment-rooms, and kep' out as late as we could, as was on the stroke of eleven.

I thought as I could 'ave slept on pavin'-stones, thro' bein' that tired, and must say as the bed we got was quite as 'ard as pavin'-stones, and not so even. There was lumps like cannon-balls in it, and it was too short for Brown, and full narrer.

It was one of them tent-beds, as I always doubts myself, and wouldn't 'ave at a gift, but I didn't wait to think about nothink, but gets to bed as quick as ever I could.

Brown, as usual, was all snores afore the light were out, tho' obligated to 'ave a chair at the bottom of the bed to lengthen it to his feet, with my shawl over 'em, thro' bein' one as can't sleep chilly.

I've 'eard speak of Harpcr Twelvetrees, as was Queen Wictoria's own destroyer, and kep' the beds all right at the Pallis, as can't be no use in sich a 'ouse as that; but if he'd come to Margate he'd soon 'ave 'is 'ands full, and plenty of practice, for never in my days did I see sich a sight as that tent bedstead when I'd been in it 'arf-a-'our and struck a light and give a look round.

Brown is one of them as might be bit by tigers all night and never feel it, but I can't sleep a wink if even I fancies as there's one about the bed, and I'm sure there must 'ave been millions.

As to killin' 'em it was not to be thought on, so I gets up and put on a shawl, and set a-dosin' with the light a-burnin' all till daylight, and then dosed off a bit, mornin' bein' come as drives 'em away, but when I woke felt more dead than alive.

I wasn't fit to be seen when I come to look in the glass, and I'm sure my own mother wouldn't 'ave know'd me. But I'd 'ave looked over every-think but that woman's impidence, as downright brazened it out as I must 'ave brought the wermin with me, and says, "I never will take in no more casuals, as that old busted box of yourn is no doubt a-swarmin' "

I says, "Mum, it comes out of a place as you might eat off."

"Yes," she says, "I might if I was a-starvin' But," she says, "you dare and take away my 'ouse's character, and I'll punish you, as is a party I know'd wasn't fit for respectable lodgin's the moment I set eyes on you, as ain't no better than a couple of tramps."

Brown he come in jest then, and shet 'er up pretty quick, a-tellin' me to get my things together and we'd start, as he brought a man with a barrer for 'em, and so we did; and I do believe as that woman would 'ave sauced us to the last, only Brown kep' a-givin' 'er one of 'is looks, as seemed to stagnate 'er tongue, and the way as she banged the



door arter us was enough to bring it off the 'inges.

And werry nice lodgin's Brown 'ad found a-facin' the sea, as were kep' by Mrs. Parfitt, as 'er 'usband is bekknown to Brown thro' bein' on the railway, as keeps 'im constant from 'ome, and would be lonesome for 'er thro' 'avin' no family; least-ways only one son as 'ave turned out wild, and been gone out to Australier these five year, and never writes a line to 'is poor mother, as is 'art-broken over it, and 'ave sent 'im all the money as she could save, as she did used to tell me with tears in 'er eyes.

It was a pretty 'ouse, and me and Brown 'ad the parlours, and only a lady and 'er son on the fust floor as injoyed delicate 'ealth, as the sayin' is.

I never see a more willin' woman than Mrs. Parfitt for to please 'er lodgers, and I'm sure never touched nothink as belonged to 'em down to a bone of cold matton; but she wasn't no cook, and of all the fried fish as ever I did see, it was a whitin' as she was a sendin' up to the fust floor, as 'adu't no appetite, and down it come agin untouched, as might be expected nat'ral.

I never see any one more put out than Mrs. Parfitt, for she says he's a invalid as reminds me of my poor feller as was far from strong, and I'd do anythink in the world for to tempt 'is appetite.

"Well, then," I says, "don't send 'im up a whitin' as black as the grate, and not egged and crumbed, a-swimmin' in its own grease, as is enough to turn the stomach of a dog as is out of sorts."

So she says, "I wish as I could do it better, but am no cook beyond bilin' and roastin', and the woman as used to come in and 'elp with the cookin' is in the 'ospital with a scald thro' a tippin' the fryin'-pan over 'er feet, and 'ot fat will burn to the bone, and pertikler with black worsted stockin's on."

"Well," I says, "if you'll let me try, I think as I can fry a whitin' for 'im as 'e'll fancy ;" so I set to, and pretty soon showed 'er 'ow a whitin' did ought to be sent up, and arter that many times I'd toss a little somethink off for 'im, as I did feel for thro' bein' only jest twenty, and took out in a Bath-chair every day, and 'is poor mother a-walkin' by the side on it a-'oldin' 'is 'and, as didn't seem to 'ave the strength of a fly 'erself.

We was werry comfortable, me and Brown, for I always went to market myself, and cooked the bit of dinner ; leastways looked to it, for the gal as Mrs. Parfitt kep' was a reg'lar born nat'ral, as most of them country gals is, tho' uncommon artful.

Often when I went to market I'd bring in some-think as I thought that poor young man up-stairs might fancy, and 'is mother were that nice-spoken

lady as would move in passin' at first, but then took to speakin'

She was werry 'opeful about 'er son, as she said 'ad overworked 'isself, but only wanted to get up 'is strength.

I says, "What did you bring 'im 'ere for, mum?" for he'd a cough as sounded dreadful 'oller, as I've 'eard say as Margate is bad for.

So she says, "Oh, the doctor said it was the place for 'im."

I says, "Oh, indeed," a-thinkin' to myself as that doctor were either a rogue or a fool, for some is only tryin' to get rid of their patients, or else don't know what's the matter with 'em, not but what I see with 'arf a eye as it was consumption all over the fust time as ever I spoke to 'im, and from that time we always 'ad a few friendly words when he was a-goin' out or comin' in jest in passin'

We'd been a week in Margate when Brown says to me one night, "Martha, whatever is the use of your comin' 'ere for the sea, and not been in it yet?"

I says, "In course not, as is a bad thing for to rush into 'eadlong the moment you arrives; besides," I says, "I means to take a 'ot one fust."

"Well," he says, "take it any'ow as'll draw the pain out of your bones," as I said I would the last thing some night and then 'urry 'ome and into bed directly.

It was a Thursday I think, tho' not sure, that I told Mrs. Parfitt as I were a-goin' to 'ave it, and she says, "Let me send word and bespeak it for you at nine o'clock, punctual," as I agreed to, for Brown he'd gone over to Ramsgate and would not be back till the last train.

The weather was uncommon close, not to say 'ot, and I'd been a-settin' out a deal all day and must say as I felt sleepy as night drawed on, and didn't take nothink arter my tea thro' a-knowin' as it is not 'ealthy for to take a bath close on your meals.

I went over to that bath jest on nine, leastways so Mrs. Parfitt says, and were no sooner in it than I don't seem to remember nothink more only dreams, and a-thinkin' as I were aboard the steamboat a-talkin' to that stewardess as all of a sudden ketched 'old on me and let me slip overboard quite gentle, and the water struck warm and pleasant like; and then I thought as I was in a boat as 'ad sprung a leak and the sailors was a-'ammerin' away at it to try and mend it, and then I 'eard 'em shout, and the boat I know was a-sinkin' tho' they didn't say so, but I felt as the water were a-gainin' on me and I fought agin it with all my might and main, down I went and up I came, and as I got to the top I 'eard voices and a row and I 'ollers 'elp and come to myself, and if I 'adn't been and fell asleep in that

bath, and they was all a-'ammerin' at the door for to wake me, and it's a mercy as I woke as I did, or I might 'ave slipped under water and been found drowned; and the bath was as cold as charity, as the sayin' is, and of all the colds as ever I did 'ave I think it was thro' takin' that 'ot bath; not as it stuck by me more than a day or two, as the fine hair soon took away, and that widder lady on the fust floor she give me some French serup as eased my cough in no time.

"Ah," she says, "I got it for my poor boy, but it don't seem to give 'im no ease."

I says, "P'r'aps 'is cough is constitutional, as don't matter, as I knowed a party myself as 'ad one from the month up to eighty-four, and then died of somethink else."

"Oh," she says, quite quick, "he ain't likely not to shake it off werry soon, for the doctor says it's only the throat."

I says, "Oh, indeed," and turned the subject, for fear as I might let slip my opinions, as in course she did not ask, and while there's life there's 'ope, as the sayin' is, so I wished 'er a good mornin', for I'd promised as I'd take a ride out in a shay along with Mrs. Arbutt, as is a old acquaintance, tho' never a woman as I took to, tho' I did use to deal with 'er in the general line, close agin Limehouse church, as I come upon unawares at Margate, as

'ad buried Arbutt, and come every year with no family only a niece to the sea-side.

I'd promised as I'd be with 'er by eleven at the latest, so 'urries on and got to 'er gate just ten minnits past, and there she was a-settin' in a donkey shay, a-waitin', dressed out like a reg'lar fairy queen for feathers and furbelows.

As soon as she see me, she says, "Mrs. B. punctstiality is the efferwesence of business."

I says, "Mrs. Arbutt," I says, "I stands corrected."

She says, "Don't stand there a-talkin', but jump in."

I didn't make no remarks, but I never did see such a ridiculous small vehicle to 'old two ladies, both full-sized and something over, for she's more than 'arf as stout agin as me.

'Owever I did get seated I do not know, and never was more uncomfortable than I were agin the hedge of that shay.

She says, "Give me the reins," to the boy as was at the donkey's 'ead.

I says, "Are you a-goin' to wenture to drive?"

She says, "In course I am."

I says, "Better trust the boy as is used to that hanimal, for I've 'eard say as donkeys, tho' small, is wicious."

She says, "I'll soon take the wice out of 'im, as 'ave ruled 'is betters," as was certingly true, so far as poor Arbuth's lifetime, as she led a dog's life, I've 'eard say.

I never did see a smaller donkey in my life, no bigger than a full-grow'd sheep. I says to the boy, "Ain't that hanimal full small for the load," as says with a grin, "Law bless you, he'd draw a 'aystack," as made Mrs. Arbuth bust out a-larfin', but I didn't see no joke in it, for I'm sure he was a vicious brute, as 'ad a nasty 'abit of layin' 'is ears flat back, and not a sign of 'air on 'is tail, except a bunch at the end on it.

Mrs. Arbuth she give 'im a lash with the whip, and up went 'is 'eels agin the front of the shay, and kicked off a bit of iron, as flew up in my face.

I says, "That's a good beginnin', any 'ow; wherever is that young rascal as did ought to be at 'is 'ead?"

She says, "I can manage 'im werry well," and gives 'im another cut with the whip. Off he starts, and run like mad agin one of them wans full of people as was a-comin' from Ramsgate.

I shall never forget the jolt as I got, as nearly sent me out a-flyin', and would 'ave done so, but for bein' wedged in that tight alongside of Mrs. Arbuth.

I never did 'ear in all my life sich langwidge and redicule as we got from that wan-load, as they called us the Siamese twins, and some said as we was a-drivin' out to sea, and then they 'ollers as we was two disgraceful old sacks of fat for one donkey, and one chap says, "Send for the Cruelty to Animals Society," and the boy as belonged to the shay he come up and sauced the other driver, as cut at 'im with 'is whip in drivin' off, and ketched me a stinger across the back, as felt pretty sharp, with nothink on but my pelerine over a musling.

So arter that I says to Mrs. Arbutt, "'Adn't you better let the boy walk at 'is 'ead?"

She says, "Certingly not; I don't want to look like a old fool as is afraid of a donkey," as I know'd she meant at me, but didn't take no notice not till I was out of that shay, safe and sound, as I wished myself over and over agin; for as to drivin', she didn't know no more about it than Miss Biffin, as were born without arms.

I never did see a donkey go on more perwerse, for he kep' a-walkin' from side to side of the road, a 'elpin' 'isself to every bit of green as he see, and showed great instincs every now and then in pickin' out where they was a-growin'.

He didn't go no great pace, escept every now and then, as when he 'eard the boy a-comin', and



then he'd break into a trot as was enough to shake your teeth out of your 'ead.

It was a uncommon 'ot day, so Mrs. Arbuth she said as we'd go towards the sea for a bit of a breeze, and so we did.

I says to 'er, "In my opinion we're a-goin' to 'ave a storm, for the sun is drawin' my back like blisters."

She says, "'Old the umbreller lower, then ;" for she'd made me leave my parrysole at 'er place, and bring the umbreller for me to 'old over both on us, as she could keep a parrysole up and drive too.

My harm were a-achin' agin with that umbreller, and jest as we was a-turnin' a corner, a gush of wind come as tore that umbreller from my 'and, and away it went.

I give a scream for the boy to stop it, and off he set a-runnin' arter it.

I says to Mrs. Arbuth, "'Adn't you better pull up and wait for 'im ?"

"Oh," she says, "if I was to pull up every time as you makes a fool of yourself, we should be out for a month, as at a shillin' a 'our would run into money."

I didn't make no answer, tho' cut to the quick, as the sayin' is, and so were that donkey, for Mrs. Arbuth 'it 'im such a vicious one jest then as woke 'im up, and off he set at a gallop, a kickin' and plungin' like a ship in a storm.

Well, there was a whole lot of them tramps a-comin' along the road as travels by the family, all rags and sunburnt, with a tin pot, and bundles, and a babby at their back, and lots of children, and if they didn't begin to run with us, leastways the children, as Mrs. Arbutt, a-seein' as they was a-frightenin' the donkey, made believe to cut at with the whip, leastways so she said, but one of them gals give a scream, and if all the lot wasn't arter us in no time, a-swearin', and a-tearin', and peltin' us with everythink as they could lay their 'ands on by the roadside. I'm sure the crack I got in the middle of my shoulders must have been a flint, it made such a bruise, and was painful for days.

I give a shout of 'elp, for if the donkey wasn't a-goin' full pelt towards the sea, and I says to Mrs. Arbutt, "We shall be over the clift in a minnit!"

"Oh," she says, "they don't lay this way."

I says, "They do," and ketched old of the rein myself, and give it a pull, as only seemed to make that donkey go the faster, and should 'ave been carried out to sea, but jest then the wheel of the shay come agin a stone, and off it flew across the road, and over we went shay and all, like a sack of coals, all over the place.

I was that stunned as I didn't know nothink till I found myself a-settin' by the roadside, with

my front fell off in my lap and my bonnet and wail gone, with my shawl and redicule.

I looks about for Mrs. Arbutt, as wasn't wisible to the naked eye, and only see as them tramps 'ad all levanted, and the donkey was a-feedin' just as tho' nothink 'adn't 'appened.

I was a-sayin' to myself as Mrs. Arbutt was a brute to go and leave me like that, when I see somethink a-'eavin' up and down in the ditch close by; and when I come to look agin, it was Mrs. Arbutt's gownd. I 'urries up to 'er, and there she was a-layin' pantin', as only shook 'er fist at me and glared frightful.

I says, "Are you 'urt serious?"

She didn't make no answer for ever so long. At last she says, "Brandy."

I says, "Bless your 'art, it ain't to be got 'ere for love or money."

She says, "In a basket under the scat of the shay."

I goes and looks there, but law, it was gone, and so was the cushins and everythink out of the shay, as them tramps 'ad made free with. When I went back and told 'er, I don't think as no tiger as ever were born could 'ave showed sich temper or used sich langwidge.

I says, "It's all your own doin'. Whatever made you go and 'it that gal with the whip?"

She says, "I never touched 'er. It was you as pulled the donkey round and went over the old man's foot, as esasperated 'em, and now they've been and robbed us of everythink, and kicked me shameful into the bargain."

Jest then the boy come back with the umbreller as was blowed to a skelington of ribbins, and he begun a-'owlin', a-sayin' as 'is father would 'arf kill 'im for leavin' the donkey, as he wouldn't 'ave done but for me.

I looked about everywhere for my bonnet, as I thought them tramps must 'ave took, but found the ruins on it, as they'd been and tore off the ribbins and the flowers, a-'angin' on a 'edge.

I managed for to put it on, and tied it under my chin with my 'ankercher, and jest then a spot of rain fell on my nose as big as a shillin', and I 'eard the thunder growlin' in the wind's eye, as looked werry black in the distance, and I know'd meant mischief. So as I see a wan a-comin' along, I 'ails it and gets in, for I was that disgusted with Mrs. Arbutt's behaviour, as called me all the old faggits she could lay 'er tongue to before that boy, that I'd walked away from 'er down the road.

When I got into that wan, there was several ladies and children as was out for a 'oliday, and I'm sure was as kind to me as if I'd been their mother, and would make me 'ave some refreshments as

they'd got with them as I stood in need on; and one of the ladies says, "That will keep you up, dear, till we gets to Ramsgate."

I says, "But I ain't a-goin' to Ramsgate."

"Yes," they says, "you are; leastways this wan is."

I says, "I must get back to Margate, as said I should be in to dinner certing, thro' espectin' Brown 'ome to a pigeon-pie and peas and bacon at two with a friend."

So they stops the wan, and out I gets, and the man were that civil as he wouldn't take nothink, but said as a wan would come by in a minnit or two as would take me back to Margate.

I waited ever so long a-listenin' to the thunder a-mutterin' out at sea, and drops of rain a-fallin' as the man with the wan said was only a sign of 'eat, as it certingly were, for I was meltin', tho' the sun 'ad gone in.

At last a wan come along, but full to the brim, as the sayin' is, so I walks on and on, 'opin' as another wan would overtake me, for the rain was a-beginnin' to fall in good earnest, so at last I tried for to stand up for shelter under a wall, a-crouchin' agin a door in it, as wasn't no real protection, but better than nothink, for I couldn't see no 'ouse nor nothink near.

I was a-squeezin' as close to that door as ever

I could, for the rain was drivin' with the wind, when all of a sudden the door give way with me, thro' its being opened sudden, and in I went, slap agin a old gentleman in a straw 'at and a um-breller as was standin' inside.

"Hallo!" he says, "what are you a-doin' here?"

I says, "A-standin' up for the rain."

"Rubbish," says he, "why this door wouldn't be no shelter to any one a third of your size." He says, "You're arter my fruit agin."

I says, "Me arter your fruit? I didn't know as you 'ad any, and 'adn't no idea as this were a garding."

He says, "Some of your lot cleared off nearly everythink last week."

I says, "My lot! What do you mean? I'm a respectable married woman from London, as 'ave come 'ere for the benefit of my 'ealth, as is well know'd."

He busts out a-larfin', and says, "You looks delicate." But he says, "Walk off, and don't let me ever ketch you a-lurkin' about my premises no more, or else I'll send you somewhere for the benefit of your 'ealth as'll quite set you up."

I says, "Send any one into Margate, and inquire of Mrs. Parfitt if I ain't respectable."

He says, "Where does she live?"

I says, "In Margate."

"Ah," he says, "but where in Margate?"

Well, I was took aback, for tho' I'd been ten days in the 'ouse, I'd never thought about the address.

So I says, "I don't know the name of the place, but," I says, "it's the last 'ouse but one in the row as you turns up to get to 'Igh Street, as 'ave green shetters, with a garding in front full of London pride and flag-flowers, and the 'ouse whitewashed all over with little lumps."

He says, "It's a likely story, but," he says, "you may go, for tho' I'm a magistrate, I shan't go no further in the matter, but let it be a warnin' to you." And if he didn't take and bang the door right in my face that wiolent as it brought down the rain a reg'lar pour.

I never 'oped to get 'ome no more, and I never shouldn't but for an old sailor as I met, as showed me the right road, as wasn't, he said, more than two mile, and I'm sure I thought we'd been miles and miles in that donkey shay.

When I got in, Mrs. Parfitt didn't know me; it was ever so long afore I 'ad the strength for to change my gownd, and wet to the skin thro' everythink.

Brown come in and brought 'is friend jest as I were ready, but that fool of a gal 'ad been and put

the pigeon-pie in the oven to keep it 'ot, and said nothink about it, thro' 'avin' took it to the baker's two 'ours too soon, and if it wasn't as black as a coal, as made me ready to cry, for I'd made it myself afore goin' out, and 'ad told 'er portikler not to take it to the oven till twelve, as she did the werry moment my back was turned.

It's lucky as Mr. Bennit, as were Brown's friend, was partial to peas and bacon, and Mrs. Parfitt 'ad a bit of cold lamb in the 'ouse. So we made a meal, but I never did see sich a man as Mr. Bennit to larf, for I thought as choke he must, when I was a-tellin' Brown and 'im about Mrs. Arbitt and the donkey shay, till I got quite put out.

So I says, "You'll escuse me, sir, but," I says, "the 'art as can't feel for another ain't no true friend in need as is a friend indeed, as the sayin' is," and Brown he turned on me, sayin', as next time as I made a fool on myself, I'd better keep it myself, as so put me out that I took to my room till they left the 'ouse, and 'ad a cup of tea with Mrs. Parfitt.

It was two nights arter about nine o'clock, I'd jest 'ad a lettice and a lobster for my supper, as them small ones eats werry sweet, when Mrs. Parfitt give a tap at the door and come in lookin' flurried.



I says, "What's the matter?"

She says, "Mrs. Brown, I wish as you could make some escuse to go up into the room over'ead and look at that young man, as strikes me as werry much wuss than either 'im or 'is ma thinks 'im."

"Well," I says, "I brought in a few flowers this evenin' as I thought he'd like, so I'll jest wash my 'ands as is rather lobstery, and make bold to take 'em up myself," and so I did.

When I got up-stairs the young gentleman was a-bein' read to by 'is ma, as was pleased with the flowers, and said as 'is throat were werry painful.

"Ah," I says, "indeed, and a painful part to 'ave bad as 'ave so much to go thro' and so much as goes thro' it, as is the nearest way to the 'art, as the sayin' is."

He says, "Mother, Mrs. Brown is quite a philosopher."

I says, "You'll escuse me, sir, not a-under-standin' you thro' not bein' one as 'ave ever read no learnin' books; but," I says, "there's more to be learnt werry often from your feller-creatures than books can teach you, for," I says, "I'm sure all as I knows is from 'earin' Brown go on about all manner, as 'ave got 'is 'ead full of steam-engines as won't let 'im rest."

The young gentleman says, "I should think not," but he spoke werry low like.

So I says, "Whatever is the matter with your throat?" as 'is ma says the doctor said was some-think of a quinsey.

"Ah," I says, "painful, but not dangerous ; leastways did not prove so to my certing knowledge with old Mrs. Seacole as was large market-gardeners, and 'ad nephews and nieces by the score a-waitin' for 'er money, as is what I calls dead men's shoes, as I'd never look for myself ; when she was took with a fit of larfin' thro' a-settin' at 'er winder and seein' a pig as run between a man's legs as 'ad a whole pile of empty 'arf sieves on 'is 'ead and throw 'im down jest for all the world like the Tower of Babel, and broke 'er quinsey as saved 'er life, tho' they 'ad the pig killed that werry week, as I do believe was spite, for the weather was that 'ot as pork was not 'olesome, and give old Seacole a bilious fever as nearly brought 'im to the symmetry, as is what we must all come to tho' it need not be pork in July as finishes us off ; and as to Mrs. Seacole she survived many years, tho' 'er end was not peace at last thro' bein' caused by the roof of the washus a-fallin' in where she was a-settin' for cool a-shellin' some peas, never dreamin' of the dry-rot a-undermindin' that roof, as was what them builders called it, though in my opinion it was more likly the damp-rot, for the steam never did get a proper went out of that washus as 'ad only a winder the

size of a sheet of paper, and obliged to 'ave the door open always as let the steam into the 'ouse and made everythink werry clammy on washin' days, and the poor old lady never looked up no more and died that next winter."

But I says, "P'r'aps I'm a-tirin' the young gentleman a-talkin' so, and am used to sickness myself."

The lady says, as 'er name were Watkinson, "You don't look like a inwalid."

"Ah," I says, "size ain't strength, and do assure you when I was married you could 'ave clasped me round the waist with one 'and, and that flat, as a lady said, I looked like a thread-paper, and I'm sure scores of people did used to say, when my 'Liza was only three months old, as they didn't know which would go fust, and now she's the mother of five."

Well, I were a-talkin' away, and that young gentleman kep' on a-gigglin', and at last 'is ma says to me, "I hope you didn't feel any the worse for gettin' so wet thro' the other day?"

I says, "Not in the way of cold; but," I says, "a false friend is wuss than 'ail or rain, as I'd rather 'ave a open enemy than a secret foe, as the sayin' is," for I'd been dreadful put out thro' 'avin' a bill for that donkey shay sent into me that werry mornin', and threatened with the County Court if

not settled at once, as I says to the lady, "can't be justice nor yet law."

So she asks me all about it, and I was a-tellin' 'ow shameful Mrs. Arbuth 'ad be'aved, to say nothink of the donkey, when that young man as 'ad been all of a titter bust out a-larfin', and coughin', and ketchin' 'is breath till he was black in the face. Up jumps 'is ma, and calls out, "He's a-dyin' "

I rushes to 'im, and see what was the matter, and give 'im a good 'ard pat between the shoulders, and 'urries 'im into the next room, for he'd been and cured 'isself a-larfin' all in a minnit, and, tho' far from well for many days, went away at the end of next week werry near recovered; as I told 'is ma, and so did others, as all he wanted were change of hair.

From the time as they give notice to leave, the way as Mrs. Parfitt went on I never did; she'd let me ring and call for everythink till I was wore out; she'd let the gal make the tea with the water not a-bilin'; she'd forget to send for the fresh butter, and never 'ave enough milk in the 'ouse; she let the cat steal everythink, down to a bit of pickled salmon I'd 'ad saved for Brown's supper, and I 'eard 'er say to the gal as she didn't want 'er kitchen blocked up with live lumber, jest 'cos I was a-makin' a fruit tart for Sunday.

I did not say nothink, a-thinkin' as we should go on to Ramsgate for a week in a day or two p'r'aps.

When the day arter that lady and her son was gone, she bounces into the room and says, "The sooner you can go, Mrs. Brown, the better I shall be pleased."

I says, "It will not break my 'art if I goes this werry moment."

She says, "I wish you would, for I'd rather 'ave your room than your company."

I says, "You're welcome to my room, as is your own, and as to my company, you'll never 'ave that no more as long as I live."

She was a bangin' out of the room, and come violent agin Brown, who were a-comin' in, as 'ad been out to get 'is boots cleaned, thro' the gal 'avin' throwed 'em up the stairs agin untouched.

So he says, "What does all this mean is what I wants to know?"

I says, "Ask your friend, Mrs. Parfitt, as knows best."

She says, "Ask that double-faced old full moon of a wife of yourn."

He says, "Hallo! be civil. What's she done to you?"

She says, "'Ticed away my best lodgers to send 'em to 'er own friends at Ramsgate."

I says, "Me 'ave friends at Ramsgate? Who-ever said so?"

Says she, "Never mind. I know what I know."

I says, "That's nothink to me. But explain what you means."

She says, "You think as the gal didn't 'ear you say as this air were too keen for that young gentleman, and as Ramsgate were more sheltered."

I says, "I did say so, certingly, but 'adn't no friends to recommend there."

She says, "You're a reg'lar foxy old serpint as I wouldn't trust nowhere, not even in a empty room; and," she says, a-turnin' to Brown, "I pities you to be tied for life to that old sack of fat with a rope round 'er."

And so she bounces out of the room, and I went and packed up that werry moment, and we was out of the house and in new lodgin's by dinner-time; not as they didn't cook us anythink in them lodgin's as 'ad a 'ouse full of lodgers, and could only get two rooms on the second floor as was tremendous 'igh, and so was the rent, only Brown 'ad promised to stop in Margate and look arter somethink for 'is friend Bennit, as made me grumble not a little, for I wanted to 'ave gone into Ramsgate if it was only to spite Mrs. Parfitt.

The 'ouse as we went to was more like a bear-garding, as the sayin' is, than a 'ouse, and as for the

children in the parlours, wild beasts was angels to 'em, as was in and out like a dog in a fair, as the sayin' is, and would bring in sea-weed and sand by the bushel; and what with there bein' nine in family and would keep all their provisions in the two rooms as they lived in, to pass their parlour-door weren't no treat; not as they need 'ave slammed it in my face that wiolent every time as I walked thro' the passage, for I'm sure I ain't one to stare in at nobody, pertikler them as dresses all over the place without a bit of blind drawed down; but it comes 'ome to 'em, for one mornin', as the eldest daughter give it a tremenjous slam when she see me a-comin' up the steps, and ketched 'er grandpa's fingers in it, as were a-gropin' 'is way along the passage, as is werry dark, and there I found 'im a-dancin' on the mat like mad, a-suckin' 'is fingers in hagonies, as I says to 'im in pity, "Get a little bilin' water as 'ot as you can bear, and 'old 'em in it, as will give you ease," as made that hugly hupstart of a gal say as any fool know'd that, and called me a interferin' old wiper for nothink; but that old man will lose both 'is nails as sure as my name's Martha, and might 'ave turned to a lock-jaw, as I've know'd a door bring on afore now; the same as 'appened to Miss Simmons, as shet 'er own father's 'eel in the street-door thro' a-baugin' on it 'ard lined with iron in 'Ackno-

Grove, as did used to be a lonesome place, open behind, and split up 'is tender 'Ercules, as the doctor called it, and made 'im limp for ever after up to 'is grave.

I 'adn't been in them lodgin's, as I couldn't abear, not two days when I found as they was a den of robbers; and no wonder the parlours kep' their bread-pan under the bed, for I never see sich locusses as they was, a-standin' me out as Brown and me 'ad eat a shoulder of lamb and French beans at one meal, and as they'd throwed away the bare bone, as I wonder didn't bring a judgment on 'em, and stole my umbreller as I left outside the door of my room thro' not a-wantin' it to drip; and was always a-pretendin' they'd put things away even down to Mr. Bennit's razor as 'ad a bed for one night, and never got 'is night-shirt back, a-pretendin' it were gone to the wash of its own accord without 'ands; and swore as the soup as I'd 'ad from the 'am and beef shop 'ad turned sour in a 'our or two, and smelt it myself a-warmin' for their dinner.

As was a ugly wretch of a woman, with a aged mother, as I'm sure they ill treated, leastways a idle, skulkin' blackguard of a brother did, as I've 'card swear at 'er myself; and a thing as they called a younger sister, as was dressed out in ringlets, a-settin' out for a walk dressed like a waggerbone



and as ugly as 'er sister, as 'ad a face like a door-knocker marked with the small-pox, and did used to live up 'Oxton way; but thieves they were always, wherever they lived, I'll swear.

I 'ad no end of a row with Mrs. Arbutt about that donkey shay, as pay for I would not, and sent me a lawyer's letter, leastways pretended it were; but Brown soon settled that, and I might 'ave 'ad the law agin Mrs. Arbutt, as throwed water over me in passin', a-pretendin' to be a-waterin' 'er plants; and the remarks as she kep' on a-makin' behind my back all the way down the jetty in a chair was enough to provoke a saint, and when she did say as I were a ship in full sail, I turns round on 'er, and says, "Any 'ow I can get along without bein' towed in a Bath-chair."

I was glad for to 'ave been down on 'er for 'er rudeness, not as I meant to stomp on 'er gouty foot as she were a-gettin' out of the chair the next day, by the doctor's orders, as said she were to try and walk a little; and 'owever should I know as she was close behind me when I stopped sudden to speak to Mrs. Israels, as is a old acquaintance of mine in the furniture line, just off Great Prescott Street, and was a-walkin' with 'er family, as is a downright picter to look at, and dressed like queens and princesses, tho' I 'ave 'eard say as Queen Wictoria never did dress the children 'an'some,

but then you see she give everythink to the poor.

I never did 'ear such a yell as that Mrs. Arbutt give, and made every one turn round; and there was a tremenjous crowd on that jetty.

She says to her niece, "Emily, where's the perlice? I'll give that old murderer into custody."

I says, "Who are yer a-callin' a murderer?"

She says, "You! Oh," she says, "I'm killed!" and flop she went down on the jetty thro' bein' too 'eavy for 'er niece to 'old 'er up.

Parties cried shame on me, some said as I'd knocked 'er down, and others as I were a swell mob, as the place were swarmin' with; and I do think I should 'ave 'ad trouble but for Mrs. Israels, as proved 'erself a good Christian a-speakin' up for me, tho' a 'Ebrer Jew as is 'er ways, and bore testament to me not bein' in fault, tho' always a 'eavy treader, as size ain't nothink to do with, for its well know'd as Daniel Lambert could dance like a feather on the table arter dinner, and never break a wine-glass, nor yet upset nothink.

That 'ot bath give me sich a sickner over the sea that I never thought of goin' into it without a shudder; but every one said as it would do me a world of good, and as to Brown, he never let me rest over it, a-sayin' as I were the most wrong-headed party as he'd ever seed, as certingly made

me feel 'urt, for if ever there was a woman to listen to advice it's me—not as I takes in all as people gives me, or a nice mess I should 'ave been in, the same as I was when Mrs. Turnbull advised me to 'ave my parlour carpet steamed, as were a stout Brussels when sent, and come 'ome a rag with all the colour flowed out of it; and as to sickness, the way as people as don't know nothink about it will give advice gratius as they calls it, they did ought to be transported the same as that old fool Mrs. Willis, as advised poor Mrs. Milton to rub 'er boy's eyes, as was inflamed, with opidildoc, as werry nearly blinded the boy, and was no doubt a fine thing for 'er 'usband's lumbago, rubbed in with a bit of new flannin across a-goin' to bed as will draw the pain out, and werry near as bad as one of them dratted medsin'-chests as is a curse in a family like Mrs. Welby's, as was a-wayin' out things from mornin' to night, and made medicated ginger-bread-nuts for the children with a over dose of everythink in 'em, as was proved by their bein' eat by mistake by all the party as went up to 'Amstead 'Eath to tea and donkey-ridin', and never thought as they'd get 'ome alive, as jalap and tartar-emetic ain't things to go out a-pleasurin' on in the general way.

But as I were a-sayin', I'd 'eard so much from Brown about 'avin' a dip in the sea, that I thought

I'd go and do it on the quiet. So off I goes and gets a machine as the party as owned wanted to come too.

I says to 'er, "No, I thank you, I do not wish to be dipped like a infant in arms."

"Law!" she says, "I'd dip you beautiful as would float like a cork."

I says, "I do not wish to do nothink like a cork, thank you; let me 'ave the machine and I can look out for myself."

"Well," she says, "you're jest in good time afore the turn of the tide, and as you don't want me I'll look arter other customers."

I says, "By all means," and was jest a-puttin' my foot on the step of the machine, when up comes a chit of a gal and says, "This machine is engaged by us," and jumps up them steps as nimble as a kitten, and two other gals followed 'er and shet the door, and off they was dragged.

I says, "Nice manners for the sea-side," and walks to the next, and jest as I were a-goin' in, a stout party all dressed in brown 'olland as made 'er look like a downright deformity, she rushes at me like a mad bull broke loose, and puts 'er foot on the step and says, "'Ow dare you attempt to henter my machine as I've engaged for the season?"

I says, "Don't lose your temper over it, or you'll bust."

She says, "Oh, you vulgar old wretch!"

Well, jest then the 'oss as 'ad been put to moved on a bit, and thro' 'er 'avin' 'er foot on the step dragged 'er a little way along and down she went a-cropper on 'er back; up flew all the family as was settin' close by along with the nuss a-screamin' like mad, "Oh, ma! dear ma!" and tryin' to pick 'er up under the arms that wiolet, and werry nigh a-draggin' that brown 'olland thing off 'er.

I says, "Let 'er alone, as can struggle on to 'er feet if you let 'er roll over, but is too 'eavy a weight for you."

"Oh, you wicked wretch!" says the nuss, "fust to knock 'er over 'cos she claimed 'er rights, and then want to leave 'er 'ere in the sand;" she says, "if I 'adn't the hinfant in my harms I'd spile your beauty for you." And if all them children as couldn't move their ma, didn't turn on me, a-pitch-in' into me with them parrysoles, and one little chap shinned me frightful.

I 'adn't it in my 'art to strike the poor things with my umbreller, a-seein' as they was only a-standin' up for their parent as were nat'ral, tho' werry disagreeable.

Some people as was a-standin' by took my part, and the stout lady 'erself managed to set up, as 'ad got a false plat tied on to 'er back 'air as come off with 'er 'at.

I says to 'er, "Did I touch you, mum?"

She says, "Touch me! why you kicked my leg from under me."

"Well," I says, "if you'll say that, you'll say anythink but your prayers, and them you whistles."

She says, "Oh! the godless old 'eathen, to talk like that before these innocent babes."

I didn't want to 'ave no more words, so I walks up to a machine as was standin' a little way off and says to a boy, "You jest put the 'oss to and take me out for a bathe."

He says, "You can't 'ave this machine."

I says, "I will."

He says, "You can't."

I says, "Get out of the way and let me get in. I ain't a-goin' to be 'umbugged all day like this;" I says, "there ain't another machine to be 'ad, and if you don't take me I'll tell your master, as I see that fat woman in the 'at give you somethink on the sly to say as that other machine were 'ers, as is a black falsehood."

So he says, "If you will 'ave this one as ain't strong, it ain't my fault."

I know'd it was only 'is lies about its not being strong, so I says, "It will carry me as far as I wants to go."

He says, "You look sharp, then."

I says, "Look sharp yourself, and put the 'oss to."

He says, "Look out for yourself, 'cos of the tide."

I says, "Don't you teach your grandmother," and into the machine I gets.

I do believe as that boy were put out with me, for the way as he drove that 'oss all over the place with me was downright dreadful.

It wasn't no use me a-'ollerin' at 'im thro' the little 'ole in the door, for what with 'im a-singin' and the sea a-roarin', nothink wasn't to be 'eard; but the way as I was knocked from one side of that machine to another, werry nigh knocked my breath out of my body, and 'it my funny-bone till I 'ollered agin, as made my fingers tingle till I couldn't 'ardly undo my dress for to put on my bathin' gownd.

I 'ung up my bonnet and shawl on a peg, and as soon as that beast of a boy stopped the 'oss, I opens the door of the machine, and when I see all the oshun a-rollin' as far as the eye could reach, I felt that scared as I'd 'arf a mind to go back.

I only put my foot on the fust step as leads down to the sea, when away went me 'eels with a run, and there I was plump in the oshun waves; it's a mercy as there were a rope a-'angin' down, as I ketched 'old on, or I should 'ave been swep' out to sea, and might 'ave been a-floatin' to all eternity, as the sayin' is.

It give me a tremenjous shock at fust, but the water soon felt werry pleasant; and as I've 'eard s'y as you did ought to go in 'ead fust, for fear of

bringin' on fits, I give my 'ead a good dip, souse come the sea all over me, and bunged up my eyes for a minnit or two, and when I could look out of 'em, I see somethink a-floatin' on the sea, and if it wasn't my 'ead of 'air and welwet as I'd forgot to take off afore goin' in.

I was that savage, for it was as good as new was that 'air, tho' I'd bought it of a 'air-dresser second 'and, as 'ad made it for a lady as 'ad never lived to wear it, and tho' a lighter colour than my own, become me wonderful, and parties said took off ten years at the werry least, as no doubt was thro' its bein' nat'ral off some young woman's 'ead, as do often sell it and never miss it, thro' its growin' that quick at 'er time of life as ain't to be expected when nearer sixty than fifty, as the sayin' is.

Jest as I were a-lookin' arter my 'air, a wave come up that sudden, and ketched me sich a wiolent slap as knocked me agin them steps, and afore I could struggle up 'em into the machine agin, another sent me a-flyin', and all my fears was bein' washed away, machine and all, for the sun 'ad gone in, and the clouds was a-comin' up like mountings.

I got into the machine at last, and dressed as quick as lightnin', and 'ollers to the boy for to drag me up, but, bless you, the young monkey was ever so far off.

I opens the door, and waives the towel like a flag. as bein' damp wouldn't fly.



I don't think as ever I were more frightened for I quite thought as night would come on, and me be left there, and would 'ave got out and waded for my life, only I 'eard say as there was quicksands all about, as won't bear the weight of a child, as 'ave been know'd to swaller up a whole ship's crews in a minnit, the same as the Goodwin's, where Mrs. Freinley's uncle, as were a pilot, floundered in the dead of the night, a-bringin' 'ome a Ingymen as wouldn't answer the 'elm, and I'm sure I'd 'ave let the sulky brute flounder by 'isself, as is terrible tempers, and only to be expected from negro blacks, tho' I've 'eard say as kindness will tame 'em like other savage brutes, not as there's no white brutes in the world, for I'm sure that old Elvey, where we lodges, is more brutal than any black, tho' white 'air and pink eyes from 'is birth, and is called a halbiner.

It was ever so long afore that boy come out to fetch me with the 'oss, as couldn't move that machine, as was stuck fast as a rock in the sea.

I says, "Don't keep on 'ittin' the hanimal, as is past work, and would be dead, no doubt, but for the sea hair, as is a wonderful thing for weakness."

I'm sure the words as that boy used to that 'oss, tho' gibberish to me, was the creatur's nat'ral langwidge as he understood, for he strained frightful a-tryin' to move that machine, but all in wain.

Says the boy to me, "I'll go and fetch another 'oss."

"What!" I says, "and leave me 'ere? Never! If you goes, I'll go too."

He says, "'Ow?"

"Why," I says, "on that 'oss's back as can carry two easy. So bring 'im 'ere."

He says, "He won't carry over 'is weight for nobody."

I says, "Over 'is weight, indeed! Why, I ain't 'arf the weight of a cart-'oss."

He give a whistle, and says, "Look sharp, the tide's a-comin' in."

I says, "You don't mean it?"

He says, "I do."

I says, "'Whatever did you leave me 'ere so long for to perish?"

He says, "It wasn't me as brought you; and the other boy said as you wanted to be left, and would 'ave this machine as didn't ought to 'ave come at all thro' the wheel bein' broke."

I says, "'Owever am I to get on that 'oss's back?"

He says, "I'll back 'im agin the machine door;" and so he did.

'Owever I did scramble onto the 'oss I don't know. I 'eld on for life by that boy, tho' the 'arness were hagony to sit on.

The way as that 'oss turned round and round in the water afore he'd start showed a hobstinate temper and a 'ard mouth. Not as I would 'ave minded that so much, if he'd not showed 'is temper by a-layin' down jest as we was within a yard or two of the shore.

I felt 'im a-goin', and ketched 'old of 'is tail as I'd slid over; but he plunged about that wiolent that I couldn't 'old on, and should no doubt 'ave been drowned, but for a fisherman in long boots as come and drawed me on to dry land more dead than alive

That fisherman was as good as a father to me, and 'urried me into the bathin' house, and fetched me 'ot brandy-and-water, whilst the women wrung me out, a-sayin' as sea-water never give cold, as I found were false, to my cost, as the sayin' is, for I kep' my bed two days, and never will believe as sea-bathin' is 'olesome for rheumatics, and is frightful dangerous besides, for I'm sure there was parties as got drowned whilst I was there out of number, all thro' bathin' in the sea.

When I was better, Brown told me as he'd 'ad to pay seven shillin's for that bathin' machine as they'd said I would 'ave, and could manage for myself without none of their 'elp, as only shows 'ow your words may be took up agin you; but should like to 'ave the law agin that boy as I'm

sure did it out of spite—a young rascal—and all them boys at the sea-side is the cheekiest lot as ever I see, and no doubt is encouraged in their impidence by them as did ought to know better instead of encouragin' 'em to scramble for 'apence, as makes 'em that graspin' as I 'ates to see in a boy ; not as I 'eld with the parties in our first floor a-chuckin' red-'ot 'apennies out of the winder, as is a cruel joke, pertikler on them poor hignorant hytalian boys as comes round with monkeys on a orgin as like as two peas, as the sayin' is, and must be some relation, I should say, barrin' the tails, and 'owled fearful with 'is fingers burnt, as relishes a nut tho' werry greedy in takin' 'em away from the other, and got served out thro' some rough characters a-throwin' stones and breakin' every winder in their apartments thro' not a-likin' to see them poor boys put on like that, as in course a 'apenny 'ot or cold is a object to.

One of them monkeys of boys brought 'ome my front, as he said they'd ketched out of the sea while a-srimpin', and Brown give 'im a shillin' for 'isself; but law bless you, as I says to 'im, it's a-throwin' good money arter bad, as the sayin' is, for it was that stiffened and sticky with the sea water, and full of sand, and wouldn't never dry proper, tho' I 'ad it washed in loowarm water and tied to the bed-post with the winder open for

days, but is as good as a weather-glass, for it always gives when wet's a-comin' on, as I can tell myself thro' my feet a-shootin' like bows and harrows, as is a sure sign, but no ile won't never make that front look itself agin.

I was a-gettin' on that nicely, and able for to go out in one of them Bath-chairs, as is the only sort of bath you'll ever ketch me in agin, for my knee was that painful, as I felt in walkin' up 'ill, so Brown got a werry steady man to wheel me out for a 'our or two every day, as would 'ave been more agreeable if he 'adn't been werry much give to rum and onions, as he breathed in wolumes warm into the back of my neck in talkin'.

He was a werry pleasant man, and took every care on me.

He'd seen a deal of life, as remembered George the Fourth a-goin' over to 'Anover from Ramsgate, as is right oppersite, and Queen Wictoria a-livin' there when quite a gal along with 'er ma, as did used not to be strong, as many ain't a-growin', but 'ave lived to be the mother of a fine family, tho' not tall; and as to that Prince of Wales, I calls 'im werry nice lookin', tho' stout, and none the wuss for that, for there ain't no cemetery without flesh, as is well known.

Well, this man as belonged to the chair, it was wonderful to 'ear 'im talk, as remembered Bony-

party a givin' 'isself up for lost aboard a man-of-war, as would 'ave been shot but for the Duke of Wellin'ton, as wouldn't stand by and see it done, as I consider were noble, because Bonyparty 'ad the mean sperrit for to reward a waggerbone as 'ad tried for to shoot the Duke, as is all fair in war, but not in cold blood.

Well, I was a-sayin' to that man 'ow I should like to see the rocks as did used to be nothink but smugglers' caves, as this old man would talk about for ever, and said as he'd never tasted a cup of tea nor a drop of brandy worth drinkin' since them smugglers 'ad been put down, as would land cargoes by night, even in the church or anywheres, and frighten people away as thought they was evil sperrits.

So I says one day as I should like for to see them caves as is still showed, but he says, "Wait till you're stronger, as is cold as the tomb."

He says, "I tell you what I'll do, I'll run you over the cliffs, and show you where them smugglers did used to land."

I says, "I don't mind a-seein' where they landed, but for mercy sake don't run me over the cliffs, as is 'ighly dangerous, and parties been know'd to fall thro' bein' overtook in liquor, or readin' along the hedge."

He says, "I'd run you all over the world, and not 'urt a 'air of your 'ead."

I says, "Not if it's cliffs, for it's agin natur."

It was a werry fine day next day, and he took me up on to the fort, as is werry agreeable situated, tho' esposed in winter, I should say.

I was a-lookin' out to sea, as was that bright and fresh as you longed to be on it, when a party come up with a telerscope, and asked if I'd like to look thro' it?

I says, "What at?"

"Oh," he says, "them wessels in the hoffing."

I says, "I can see werry well with the naked eye all as I wants to see;" for I don't 'old with them telerscopes, as I know'd a party as lived oppersite to Mrs. Padwick's as 'ad one always at the winder as was that powerful as it could see thro' anythink and was always a-lookin' at the stars, as was a downright nuisance to the oppersite neighbours a-goin' to bed. One on 'em indeed did threaten for to knock 'im over and the telerscope too, if he made that free with it into their second floor.

While I was a-talkin' to the party with the telerscope, up comes old Eadley as belonged to the chair, and 'ad been to get 'isself 'arf a pint as he stood in need on after that up-'ill work, and begun a-wranglin' with the telerscope man.

I says, "Don't stop 'ere a-arglin' and barglin', but let me see them places where the smugglers did used to land," so on he pushed the chair.

'Im with the telerscope kep' on a-follerin' a-sniggerin' and a-larfin' At last we got to a place cut out of the cliffs as leads down to the sea with a dreadful steep slope.

Old Eadley stops the chair and began a-tellin' me all about 'ow them smugglers did used to roll the casks of liquor up this place as was made for the purpose, when the telerscope-man come up and says, "Go it, Eadley, but don't pitch it too strong or the old lady'll get frightened."

I says, "Who are you a-callin' old? get out you impident waggerbone, or I'll frighten you."

He says, "You've only got to ask me to push your chair, and that would frighten any one, as requires a steam-ingin' to draw it."

He put 'is 'and on the chair, and made believe with all 'is might to try and move it.

Old Eadley says, "Take your 'and off the chair," and give 'im a knock on the arm.

He turned round and give old Eadley a blow, and between 'em with their struggles they started off that chair, as began a-goin' by itself all down the 'ill full pelt, as the sayin' is.

I screamed out, but there wasn't no one near but them two old fools as was a-strugglin' together.



There was parties on the cliffs over'ead as giv a shout, but in course couldn't be expected to jump down and stop the chair, as I couldn't get out on thro' the apron bein' buttoned over me tight.

There I was with the rollin' billers as they calls em right afore me a-givin' myself up for lost.

I shet my eyes, and felt as it were all over with me, and so it was, for as luck would 'ave it the wheel of that chair went over a somethink as upset it, and away I went over, chair and all, as is the only thing as saved me from a watery grave.

I was a good deal shook, but more frightened than 'urt, as the sayin' is, and glad I was for to be able to walk up to where one of them carriages was, and 'ome I got more dead than alive, but luckily no bones broke.

Some'ow that fright as I 'ad with that chair seemed to do me good, for I began to walk agin, as I says, "No more of your chairs for me, Mr. Eadley," as comes that evenin' with tears in 'is eyes, but in my opinion a little on, a-beggin' and a-prayin' as I'd look over it.

I says, "I don't bear no malice; but," I says, "as to ever puttin' my foot in a chair agin, I'd as soon think of puttin' it into a rat-'ole."

I must say as I did think that old Eadley a 'onest-'arted old tar, and wouldn't 'ave believed 'im the mask of deceit as he proved 'isself over some

tea and brandy as he got me from the smugglers as he told me 'ad only made believe to be put down, but was a-lurkin' about all over the place afraid of their lives, and always 'ad a little of the right sort as they'd sell cheap to a friend, as in course they was drove to thro' not a-darin' to sell it open.

I certainly do relish a cup of good tea, and likes to 'ave a little fine old brandy in the 'ouse to be took as a medicine, as 'ave saved many a life in the plum season.

So I agreed as I'd 'ave a pound of tea and a bottle of brandy, as was to come to ten shillin's the two without duty; "but," says old Eadley, as brought it late at night, "you mustn't ever open 'em in Margate, as would be detected by the smell alone, specially in this 'ouse where you're a-lodgin', as they're in the Excise and would smell a rat in a instant."

I says, "It may be a rat as I smells all over this 'ouse, as is a filthy 'ole, and I'm a-goin' to leave the day arter to-morrer as other lodgers 'as done a'ready, as the dust-'ole alone is putrid fever, and that ain't nothink to the drains."

Says old Eadley, "Wherever you are in Margate don't use the tea or brandy, as is a 'eavy fine to all concerned in it and may be prison."

I says, "Law! take it back, then."

He says, "Not so green," and 'obbles off with my 'arf sov'rin.

I never touched that tea nor brandy, but packed it away at the bottom of my box till I got 'ome, and then found as the bottle 'ad broke and soaked thro' and thro' everythink, but I'm sure wasn't no loss if it was like the tea as I used on Brown's birthday, when we'd a few friends, and put in double what old Eadley told me, as said a pinch on it would go as far as 'arf a ounce of what I got at the shops.

I made it myself with the kittle full bilin', and it was such rubbish as I wouldn't 'ave give to a enemy, let alone old friends as tried to make the best on it; but bad was the best, as 'ad all to be throwed away and fresh made.

I always drinks it mixed myself, at five shillin's, leastways that's what it comes to with two ounces of gunpowder to a pound of four shillin' black, tho' I must say as a old friend of mine, as is a good judge of tea and always gives me a capital cup, she drinks Horniman's uncoloured, as I think I shall take to myself.

The evenin' afore I left them lodgin's, Brown bein' over at Canterbury, I went to drink tea along with Mrs. Israels, as is a friendly soul and glad to see me.

Th' em children of 'ers is downright prodigals,

They dances and sings lovely, and goes on for all the world like play actors, in werry short frocks run thro' with blue ribbins, and blue morroker shoes and pink silk stockin's; their 'air's lovely, all loose down their backs, as I says I should say would spile it thro' the hends a-splittin', and as to young Master Israels, as I put my foot in it by askin' of 'is Christian name, as wasn't never christened of course, tho' baptized in the name of Samuel.

He were a lovely boy, tho' too much ile on 'is 'air to please me, as curled nat'ral, and dressed in blue welwet with gold buttons and lovely open-work collar, and to 'ear 'im under seven go on Shakspeare by the 'our together it was wonderful, tho' 'Ebrer to me as is what they're so proud on.

I don't know as ever I 'ad a more agreeable evenin' and delicious things for tea, as is wonderful cooks, and sweet wines and things with cakes afore I come away, and a little drop of what they calls snaps as 'ave a fine flavour, and Mrs. Israels says they 'ad brought 'em from 'Olland, as is where 'er people comes from to correct them sweets.

It was a lovely night and not far to go, so I walks 'ome and got to the door as the clock were a-strikin' ten.

I turns the 'andle as was my constant 'abit up to eleven, and found as the door was locked and bolted.

So I give a gentle tap, but loud enough to be 'eard all over the 'ouse, but no one didn't come to the door.

I knocks agin and agin but all was silence like the grave, as the sayin' is.

I knocked and knocked till at last a winder were opened next door, and a party as was evident been to bed says, "Confound your tappin', go away."

I says, "Go away, indeed; when I wants to get in and go to bed."

"Why," he says, "they're all gone away."

I says, "Whatever do you mean?"

"Why," he says, "she's give up possession to the landlord as 'ave locked up the 'ouse; but I can't stop 'ere a-chatterin' with you all night, as'll give me my death of cold," and down he shets the winder.

I thought as I should 'ave dropped; it were jest eleven o'clock and where to go for a bed I didn't know no more than the child unborn, and must 'ave slep' on the door-step only a widder lady as lodged next door come 'ome at that werry moment, and like a warm-'arted Irish 'ooman as she were, give me a bed for the night. I don't think as ever I were that sitivated like in my life afore without anythink of my own to sleep in, not so much as a 'air-brush, and tho' they do say as

you did not ought to look a gift 'oss in the face, yet I couldn't 'elp a-wishin' as that bed as the good lady give me 'adn't been a flock, as I couldn't get no rest on, and every bone in my body was a-achin' when I got up with my face swelled up all one side thro' the winder not a-shettin' close agin the bed-'ead.

I was glad as there weren't anythink alive in that bed except myself, as might 'ave been expected from the look of it.

I never did meet a kinder soul than that Mrs. Murphy, as would 'ave me stop to breakfast, and don't think as ever I tasted better 'am and eggs with a new cottage loaf and prongs as is a relish.

I was all of a fidget not a-knowin' 'ow to act, and espectin' Brown back as I know'd would be awful put out, so kep' on the look out for 'im, and sure enough see 'im come a-ridin' up in a one-'oss carriage about eleven o'clock and goes out to meet 'im.

He says, "That's right, old gal! you're all ready, jump in. Where's the boxes? we ain't got a minnit to spare to ketch the train."

I says, "Law! Brown, 'ow you do run on to be sure, you takes away my breath."

He says, "Oh! bother your breath, we shall miss the train."

I says, "Do 'ear any one speak," and tells 'im what 'ad 'appened.

Ravin' bulls is a trifle to the way as he went on, a-sayin' as he'd wrote me a letter as I did ought to 'ave 'ad by the last post overnight, a-tellin' me we must be off 'ome by the train in the middle of the day as 'is Aunt 'Opkins were not expected to get over it, and not a soul near 'er but the doctor and 'er servant as'll lay 'er 'ands on everythink the moment the breath's out of 'er body, the same as that Martha Terry did when old Richardson went off the 'ooks, as the sayin' is, and took everythink out of the 'ouse down to the 'at pegs in the 'all afore she let the relatives know as he was dead and buried, as she managed thro' the lawyer as was 'is executioner, and in my opinion did not come to 'is end by fair means, tho' that lawyer did make me apologize public for sayin' so; yet I will say that to give any one as is bad with a wiolent diorama biled beef and bottled stout over night, is no better than murder all the world over.

Brown, he went round for to find the landlord of that 'ouse, but of all the ruffians as ever I did see that landlord was the wust, as said he wouldn't give up a rag till 'is rent were paid, and used langwidge enough to blister 'is tongue.

While we was a-talkin', Brown got a telergram from 'is aunt's doctor, a-sayin' as she'd took a turn

and might recover, as them old ladies werry often does as is as tough as pavin' stones, the same as Mrs. Oldfield, as were kep' alive thro' the brown creturs along of me a-droppin' brandy down 'er throat every 'arf 'our, with 'er jaw dropped and 'er eyes fixed, and nicely abused I got by 'er nephew, as were a-waitin' for 'er money, but never got it a-graspin' wretch, as am thankful to say she left it all to the widder of 'is brother, as was only forty pounds a year and 'er bits of furniture, but come in werry 'andy to that poor soul as were left with three and weak eyes as stopped 'er from workin' at 'er business, as were lace mendin'

I never was so miserable in my life as I felt that mornin', without no clothes, and Brown not a shirt to 'is back to change, and we 'ad to pay two weeks' rent afore we could get our things tho' not owin' a farthin', for I'd paid that two-faced 'ussy the day afore tho' not due, as come a-carneyin' me and sayin' it would be a conwenience if I wouldn't mind a-payin' two days afore'and, and little did I think as she were sich a wiper a-layin' in wait for me; but we got the boxes, and then Brown says to me, "It's only four miles inland to Sam Bennit's, as 'ave made me promise to come and see 'im and bring you, only 'earin' about aunt bein' that bad throwed me out."

I says, "Is Mr. Bennit a family, Brown?"



He says, "A widderrerr with grow'd-up daughters, and a nice place as ever you see, with the 'ay all down and the sea in the distance."

I says, "Let's go to a inn and make ourselves respectable, and arter a bit of dinner then we'll see about goin'." And so we did, and left my big box as I'd 'ad patched-up behind, and only took a carpet bag for the night.

It were a pretty drive to Mr. Bennit's as is a farm-'ouse all whitewash and wild-roses, and certingly he did seem glad to see us, and 'ad a bed all ready, tho' the ceilin' were that low as I werry nigh knocked my 'ead off and smashed my bonnet agin a beam the fust thing.

It was werry agreeable a-drinkin' tea on the lawn, and smellin' the 'ay as were that sweet as was like the country. Mr. Bennit was werry perlite and so was the youngest daughter tho' crooked; but the eldest was a reg'lar screamin' tartar, as the sayin' is, for temper, with a yaller complexion and long ringlets—not as she showed any hairs to me at first but quite the contrairy, but the way as she showed the clover foot to 'er pa about the 'ay and spoke to the servants showed 'er true colours; not as she could 'elp bein' lame as they told me were a fall brought it on, but a fall don't make one leg a full foot shorter than the other, as I should say was the 'ip bein' drawed up into the body, as tho' out of

sight never can be out of mind, and the reason, no doubt, as 'er father 'ad brought 'em up near the sea-side, as is bracin' hair, within two miles, but won't never cure a contracted limb nor yet set the back-bone straight, tho' a wonderful thing for the liver, as is often the seat of the mischief, especial with young children, as I'm sure I never expected to see Mrs. Elliot's fust anythink but a object, as never walked till close on five, and is now in the blues, where they won't take 'em without a doctor's certificate to prove as they're over six feet without a blemish, as they don't consider a 'air lip nor yet a cast in the eye, as he 'ad both, brought on in teethin' so 'is mother said, but born so is my opinion.

We set a-takin' our tea, as they took at four as is full early but werry pleasant, and 'ad some fruit, not as I took any thro' a-considerin' as it spiles the tea.

When it was over Mr. Bennit says, "Wouldn't you like for to walk round the farm, Mrs. Brown?"

I says, "In course; but not this evenin', as 'ave only thin shoes on as don't suit where there's so much damp about."

"Oh," he says, "it's as dry as a bone everywhere."

So in course I couldn't say a word, and off we goes all over the place, leastways all but that eldest daughter as said she'd somethink better to do.

I'm sure what with 'is Alderney pigs and barn-door cows, and cocks, and 'enns, and pigeons, let alone a donkey and two goats, that man's place were like a live Noah's ark, only nothink didn't seem pairs.

I was tired to death a-goin' about it, and 'ad to be pulled out once or twice a-sinkin' down in that farm-yard as is werry moist under the straw.

At last Mr. Bennit, he says, "Now we'll go to the 'ay-field, as the sun is off by this time," and so we did.

They was just a-givin' over for the day, and it did look werry nice and smelt delicious, but I was that tired I thought as drop I must, and says to Matilda Bennit as I should like to set down.

"Oh," she says, "let's sit on the 'aycocks;" she says, "we'll 'ave one made up for us;" so she calls to a boy as come with one of them forks and tells 'im to pick up some more 'ay and put it together, and so he did, and another boy 'elped 'im, and come a-runnin' with lumps of 'ay on 'is fork, as they throwed in a 'eap, and glad I was for to flop myself down on it, but didn't believe as I could 'ave jumped up agin as sharp as I did, for if that boy didn't take and run the 'ay fork into me inches deep.

I give a yell as made 'em all run to me. I says, "It don't signify, for it ain't nowhere as is mortal, and I ain't one as is inflammable; but," I says, "it

might 'ave been my death, and whatever made 'im do it?"

The boy says as he was only a-puttin' the 'ay together for to make it softer, not a-knowin' as I were a-goin' to set down so sudden.

I wasn't much 'urt escept in my feelin's, a-seein' as they was all on the grin, and as to Brown, he roared, as encouraged Mr. Bennit for to forget 'is manners.

So I says to 'im, "A pitchfork is a pitchfork, and no joke as I can see, but no one knows where the shoe pinches but them as wears it." I says, "It's my own fault, in course, as did ought to remember as chairs is the best seats for me."

Brown says, "The idea of a woman at your time of life a-throwin' yourself on a 'aycock like that."

I says, "What 'ave time of life got to do with it, Mr. Brown, as a pitchfork will make any one feel if they was the hage of Jerusalem."

Mr. Bennit he'd sent for a chair for me, and I did set a little while, but soon felt as the midges was too much for the back of my neck. So we went in, and arter supper I was glad to get to bed.

I says to Brown, "'Ow long are we a-goin' to stop?"

"Oh," he says, "Bennit's a capital chap, he wants us to stay as long as we likes, and is a-goin' to

drive me over in the mornin' to see some stock he's a-goin' to buy."

"Well," I says, "don't let's out-stay our welcome, for I'm sure that eldest daughter don't want us."

"Oh," he says, "you're always full of your fancies."

Well, arter we'd 'ad breakfast, off them two went, and left me with them sisters as quarrelled from breakfast to dinner over some young man, as was downright foolishness, for they was both close on forty, let alone bein' deformed and huggy.

I got so sick of 'earin' 'em jangle, that I went to my room and washed out a few fine things in my 'and-bason, a-thinkin' as I'd lay 'em on the grass to bleach, as was only a few collars and sleeves.

I'd set myself down in the parlour, when I'd put 'em out, a-waitin' for dinner, when I 'eard that limpin' brimstone say, "Whose been a-puttin' them rags over the lawn?" and 'eard some one's voice say as I didn't know,

"Why, old Fatty to be sure."

"Then," says the other, "I'll teach 'er to get up 'er washin' 'ere, as is like 'er impidence."

I didn't take no notice thro' not a-likin' to 'ave seemed to listen, as is a mean haction, so I set still.

Werry soon the youngest come in and said, "Oh. Mrs. Brown, dinner's ready, and I 'ope you

can eat beans and bacon, for the butcher 'as never brought the meat as were ordered;" as I know'd were a false'ood, for I'd 'eard 'er sister say from my bed-room as she shouldn't send for no shoulder of lamb for to please 'er father, and that them as asks theirselves must take what they can get.

I never said a word, but eat a bit of the bacon as were beastly, and beans is a thing as a little on goes a great way with me.

Of all the 'ard drippin'-crusts as there was to that black currant pie I never did; it was like flint, and set the 'uman tooth at defiance, leastways the only one as I've got left couldn't do nothink with it.

To 'ear the remarks of that eldest daughter, a-sayin' as if she'd know'd of the 'onour of my visit she'd 'ave 'ad everythink in apple-pie order.

I says, "I don't know about apple-pies, but don't consider as you're good 'ands at pastry."

"Oh," she says, "insult our 'umble ways."

I says, "I don't mean no insults, as I don't want to 'ave no words with you; I shall go to my bed-room, and wait for my 'usban' to come back, and not be in the way of your quarrels."

She says, "I suppose you want to finish your washin', as is a nice thing to do in a strange 'ouse, as I suppose you've brought that bag full."

I didn't make no answer, but walked out of the room, and went up-stairs, and when I'd been there

a good bit, I remembered my bit of bleachin', and looks out of my winder, and if that grass-plot where I'd laid my things wasn't full of cows a-grubbin' and a-feedin' all over the place.

I 'urries down, and got 'old of a clothes-prop, and run to drive them cows away, when I 'eard that wixen of a woman 'oller out, "If you dare drive my father's cows I'll set the dogs at you."

I says, "And I'll give you, and the dogs too, this clothes-prop;" and sets to work a-pickin' up my things, as was that trod under foot by them cows and messed about as I didn't think as they'd ever come round.

I went back to my room, and got all ready to go the moment as Brown should come back, and watched for the shay-cart a-comin' along the lane; and as soon as ever I see it, I goes down and got the servant to bring down the bag as I'd give a shillin' to, tho' I think as it was 'er voice as I'd 'eard call me "Old Fatty," but in course only did it to curry favour with that wile-tempered 'ussy.

I got to the gate jest as Mr. Bennit drawed up, and says, "You must take me into Margate, Brown; it's life and death."

I see as both 'im and Bennit 'ad 'ad their wacks, as the sayin' is.

So he says, "It can't be done."

I says, "It must."

Bennit says, "Law, Mrs. Brown! we've come 'ome for a jolly evenin', and got roast fowls for supper."

I says, "I wish you may enjoy 'em, but go I must and will."

So Brown says, "Then you may go alone."

I says, "I will not. I'll go this moment, and you shall come too." I don't know as ever I spoke so positive to 'im before.

Bennit said as 'is 'oss were too tired, and tried all as ever he could to persuade me to stop, and calls out 'is daughter, and says, "You spit-fire, this is your doin', I know. What did I tell you afore I went out about not showin' your temper?"

She says, a-scowlin' at 'im, "Yes, you told me to be civil to this woman, because you wanted to get money out of 'er 'usban' "

I never see a man fly into sich a rage. He turned deadly white, and would 'ave struck 'er but for Brown, and clenched 'is teeth and fists.

"Oh," she says, "let 'im strike me as he used to my dead mother, and 'ave me before now. He's robb'd us of everythink to sot it away with others as wile as 'isself, and you are some of the gang, I suppose."

I was dreadful shocked. I says, "Miss Bennit, I'm sorry as ever I come, but know'd nothink



of your father." I says, "Brown, come away. I'll walk, if we drops on the road."

He didn't say a word, but picked up the carpet-bag, and I lays 'old of 'is harm, and off we walked together. Tho' I was dreadful aggrawated, I don't think I should 'ave 'ad the pluck to 'ave started if I'd know'd what a journey I 'ad afore me. I will say as Brown behaved noble, never a murmurin' agin the carpet-bag, and sayin' as I'd done right all the way along, till we see the lights of Margate, as was a godsend, for I'd 'ardly a leg to stand on when we got into the town, just on ten o'clock.

It was lucky as we'd left our things behind at that inn, or we should not 'ave got a bed all night, and I was that sick and tired of bein' knocked about so, as I said I'd go 'ome, for I didn't feel no better for the sea-side; but Brown he said as we'd 'ave a week, and enjoy ourselves, for he was in 'igh sperrits at not 'avin' been let in by that old Bennit as he'd found out all about, and was werry nigh a-lendin' 'im three 'undred pounds on 'is farm, as were pawned over 'ead and ears a'ready, as the lawyer told 'im, and would 'ave lent 'im the money on only but for me a-insistin' on leavin' the 'ouse, as shows that when you says a thing you did ought to stick to it, and not be a-waccinatin' about it, as my dear mother always did set 'er face agin, not believin' as it could be a right thing to do, tho' in

my opinion inoculation is only a-meetin' trouble 'arf-way, as is a thing I never would do myself, tho' p'r'aps better than 'avin' it nat'ral, as is a dreadful disfigurement, and didn't ought to allow nobody for to see theirselves in a lookin'-glass arter sudden, as 'ave been know'd to die thro' the shock; not as I can a-bear to 'ear of sich rubbish as any one 'avin' the skin torn off their face as is quite useless, for in course they are sure to be werry much pitted any'ow.

I must say as I did enjoy that last week at Margate werry much, and the things as I got in raffles at the bazaar was not to be credited, and only puttin' in a shillin' at a time, and got a pair of candlesticks and a inkstand with a blottin'-case, and two pair of lovely screens, and were werry near gettin' a lovely dressin'-case fit for a duchess, only when I got it 'ome they come and said as it were a-drawed by another Mrs. Brown, as I shouldn't 'ave minded so much if the young man as come about it 'adn't said as Brown were sich a common name.

I says, "I beg your pardin that it ain't, for there's titled parties as is proud to own it; and if every one 'ad their rights, my 'usban' might 'old 'is 'cad up with the best, only thro' 'is father never tellin' on 'im where he was christened, tho' he do believe it were old Marrybone Church; and there's

a tombstone in that churchyard as Brown can all but swear to was 'is grandfather's, as were a builder down Paddington way, and 'ad 'ouses by the score out near Tottenham, as would be a fortune now, only morgiged without no tittle-deeds, as is the ruin of many."

So that shet that young man up, not as I'd 'ave give up the dressin'-case if the other Mrs. Brown 'adn't come and showed me 'er ticket, as were ninety-six, and said as mine were sixty-nine; so in course I wouldn't keep back what were 'ern lawful.

Brown he called me a old hass, as is 'is vulgar ways, and said as I'd been took in; not as I ever went near that libery agin, for all the lovely music as there was of a night, for it's my opinion as there's a great mixture in the company, and am pretty sure as my pocket were picked there, tho' I only set down by two parties as was dressed beautiful, but looked bold, tho' p'r'aps I dropped it, and 'ad a lesson not to bring no charges thro' what 'appened that time as I went to the 'All of the Sea, as is like fairyland all over, and beautiful music a-playin', and suppers as is delicious, with oysters caught fresh out of the sea close at your werry feet.

I was a-walkin' about there, and 'ad been in with Brown to 'ave a somethink at the refreshment bar, and as we was a-comin' back there was a deal of

scrougin' and pushin', and all of a sudden I misses my brooch as I'd won at the libery two days afore, as I were a-goin' to 'ave Brown's 'air put into. I says, "I've dropped my brooch," as the pin on were nat'rally weak.

Brown says, "No great loss."

I says, "I begs your pardin, I values it." So I looks about and speaks to one or two of the parties as belongs to the 'All, but nobody 'adn't seen it.

I set down quite wexed, and Brown he'd fell in with a friend as he were a-goin' to 'ave a glass with, and says to me, "Set 'ere, Martha, I won't be many minnits." I says, "Certingly," and there I set.

Well, a minnit or two arter there come along a young woman a-gigglin' and a-larfin' with a young feller, and if she 'adn't got my brooch stuck in 'er dress.

I give 'er a gentle tap with my parrysole, and says, "I'll trouble you for that brooch, as is mine, and you've picked up."

She only bust out a-larfin', and says, "She's screwed."

I got up in a reg'lar rage, and says, "You impident 'ussy, 'ow dare you say so? as it's my opinion as you stole my brooch," and I 'ollers out to the perliceman as was at the door, and says, "I've been robbed."

He come up and says, "What's the row?"

So I told 'im, and he turns to the young woman, as says as cool as a lettice, "She's welcome to the brooch, as is Brummagem rubbish."

I says, "It's solid gold, as I won in a raffle."

The perliceman he larfed and says, "You'd better square it."

Says the young woman, "There's nothink to square. I won this brooch in a raffle."

I says, "'Ow can you tell sich a falsehood, for I can swear it's mine."

"Oh," she says, "give me in charge for stealin' it."

I says, "I will if you give me any more of your impidence."

She says, "You'd better, as will rue it the longest day you lives."

I do believe as I should 'ave 'ad 'er locked up, but luckily Brown come up and settled the matter at once, a-sayin' as he'd got my brooch as I'd left on the counter where we'd took the refreshments, as I well remembered a-layin' it down thro' bein' that 'ot as I were obligated to undo my shawl, and 'ad come away and left it unawares.

Well, I says to the young lady as I were werry sorry, but she says, "I don't care no more for your sorrer than your hanger, as must be a reg'lar old idjot to want such a thing, as I only stuck in my

dress for a lark, and ain't worth threepence," and off she walks a-larfin', and I did look foolish to everybody a-standin' round, and Brown were that savage as he made me go 'ome at once, and called me sich names as made my 'art nearly break a-cryin' myself to sleep; and what made me most savage was in the mornin' 'im a-provin' as I'd been and spent over three pounds at that bazaar, and 'adn't got anythink worth five shillin's, but law it was my own fault, for 'owever can they afford to keep up that place with music and all manner, and then give away plate and jewels worth thousands for a shillin' or 'arf-a-crown a chance?

So I didn't go in for no more raffles, and was really sorry as I'd been and taxed that young woman with my brooch, not as she need 'ave turned on me with that abuse as she did on the jetty, when I was a-walkin' all alone two days arter, and 'eard 'er a-makin' werry personal remarks about my figger behind my back, and didn't know as it were the same party till she said quite loud, "She's a mask of rubbish all together, or she would never 'ave wore that twopenny 'apenny brooch in earnest."

I turned round and give 'er a look, and if she didn't put out 'er tongue at me.

So I says, "Pray don't forget the lady, as is lettin' of yourself down."

She says, "I should like to let you down over

the end of the jetty for to ketch crabs with, as they always baits for with hoffal."

I couldn't stand that, and says, "I thought you was a decent-behaved gal when I 'polegized for takin' you for a thief, but now it's my opinion as there wasn't no apology due."

She give one drive at me with both 'ands as I slipped a one side, and she come butt agin a old gentleman as she sent a-flyin' on to a lady's lap as were in one of them Bath-chairs, as was drove wiolent back among the crowd, and you never see anythink like the row as there were.

Over went the chair, a-flyin' out went the lady, and sent the little dog as she were a-nussin' clean over the side of the pier, as fell down among the passengers as was a-landin' from the steam-boats, and bit one or two as raised the cry of mad-dog, and every one took to their 'eels.

I was swep' along ever so far, and then knocked breathless agin the side of the pier; and while a-standin' there a-tryin' to get my breath agin, up come that young woman, with a lot of others and a constable, for to give me in charge.

At fust I says to the constable, "If you're a-goin' to take me up, you may carry me."

"Well," says the perlicemen as was come up, "we'll soon 'ave the stretcher out for you."

"What," I says, "and strap me down, a respect-

able party, like a lost, drunken lunatic as I see you carryin' along the other day?"

He says, "Certingly I will, so you'd better come quiet."

I says, "I'll go, if it's the laws of nature, as in course I must obey, as old Mr. Tomlinson said to the doctor as give 'im up with the jaunders at ninety-two;" and so sayin' I walks on.

Says the perliceman, "If he's a respectable man and a 'ousekeeper, and will bail you, it's all right."

I says, "Who are you a-talkin' about?"

He says, "Mr. Tomlinson. Is he a 'ousekeeper?"

I says, "He's been dead over five and twenty years, and so must 'is 'ousekeeper be, for she were a old lady when I was a gal."

He says to me, "Then he ain't no good. Where do you live?"

I says, "Close agin 'Awley Square; and if my 'usban' was 'ere, he'd make you repent a-takin' me up thro' the streets like a gang of pick-pockets."

It was werry disagreeable walkin' with every one a-jeerin' and a-starin' till we got to the perlice station, and the inspector begun for to ask questions, and says, "Who makes the charge?"

No one answered, and there wasn't no one to



answer, for that young woman didn't show up, as I'd 'ave give in charge 'erself, for it was all 'er doin' as gave the old gent that shove, tho' meant for me.

So in course the inspector said as he'd discharge me; but he says, "Don't you be brought 'ere no more, or it'll go 'ard agin you, as we've got a eye on all the lot of you as 'ave come down by the boat two days ago."

I says, "I've been 'ere this four weeks, and shall stop another ten days, for the place is only jest a-beginnin' to tell on my constitution."

"Well, then," he says, "mind 'ow you behaves yourself. Clear the hoffice," and out I was shoved, and got 'ome safe at last.

We was a-lodgin' along with a Mrs. Barlow, a werry nice woman as 'ad know'd better days, but was come down in the world thro' a sick 'usban' as 'ad kep' 'is bed fourteen year all thro' wearin' a tight boot, as in my opinion is all rubbish, but shows scrofula a-peepin' out, and a awful thing too, for I'm sure there was Miss Hanger as was not able to be turned in 'er bed and stone blind thro' it, as run in the family with black patches behind their years, as they do say was the reason as George the Fourth took to them black silk 'ankerchiefs as was thought a great disfigurement, and as to Mrs. Barlow, poor thing, she'd a frightful face thro' a-

fallin' agin the bars of the grate a-faintin', as burnt all the black an inch deep into 'er skin just across 'er nose as don't look well.

She was a poor, patient, wore-out thing as would cry every hinstant till she made me that dull that I says to 'er, "Escuse me, Mrs. Barlow, but," I says, "you gives way too much as is bad for you, for it's well known as care killed the cat as 'ave nine lives, and whatever can you 'ope for as 'ave only one?"

I'm sure such a life as she 'ad, nearly wore out of 'er body thro' a-tryin' to turn 'im in bed as two ticket-porters couldn't lift, and of all the men to snore I never did, in the back parlour jest under my room as couldn't get a wink for 'im.

Jest at that time as I 'ad the row on the jetty Brown he'd gone over to Canterbury agin so I was left alone, and thro' bein' dull got a book for to read as were werry hinterestin' tho' a old one, for it 'ad belonged to Mrs. Barlow's mother, as did used to keep a circulation libery at Deal.

I don't know as I should 'ave begun it if I'd know'd as she 'adn't got the second wolume at all, thro' a party as 'ad it to read a-takin' it away with 'er, and as to third wolume, she might as well 'ave took it too, for there was about forty pages tore out, and jest the part where you couldn't make out which of the two he married, as were a deceitful rascal a-

courtin' two gals at once as was sisters, and one never told the other, and jest where he'd made up 'is mind to pison one on 'em the book were that lost and tore as I couldn't never make out nothink more than they wasn't a 'appy couple, as 'owever should they be a-livin' in that desolate castle and 'er a-weepin' constant, and would have throwed 'erself over the battle-bridge, as is a place I well remembers with King George the Fourth's staty in 'is royal robes, the same as they've got 'im now at Madame Tusso's, as 'ave been turned into a railway, the werry one as they took me wrong by that time as I'd been a-shoppin' on Ludgate 'Ill, and were a-goin' to drink tea along with Mrs. Padwick's married daughter as lives close agin San Pancrust's Church, and says, "Come early by the under-ground, as will put you out at Gower Street."

I asks 'em at that Ludgate station, when I'd took a little refreshments, tho' I must say as a bit of butter would 'ave improved the sandwich, which train I were to go by.

The gentleman as I see there was that perlite as not only told me where to go, but showed me the office where I took a ticket for Gower Street, and went up one staircase as were wrong, and 'ad to come down, go up another thro' the train a-goin' from oppersite, and 'ad only jest time to ketch it as were a-startin'.

I gets into it all of a 'urry, and the way as I were whisked along is enough to take away any one's breath, and sometimes daylight and sometimes dark, a-stoppin' and a-'ollerin' their gibberish as no one can't understand.

At last I says to a gent a-settin' oppersite in black whiskers, as were a-readin',

"Escuse me, sir, but aire we anywhere's near Gower Street?"

"Bless the woman," he says; "why, we're jest on Barnet."

I says, "Mercy on me, and Mary Ann takes 'er tea at five, and now its 'arf-past."

In course I got out as soon as ever the train stopped, and was then only cheeked for not 'avin' changed at Farringdon.

I says, "I'll report you, my man, as sure as eggs is eggs;" but had to wait 'arf-a-'our for a return train, as only took me to King's Cross, where I spoke to the inspector, as said I'd better speak to the superintendent, as I went to 'is office, and a werry nice spoken young gentleman were that perlite, as I said I only wished to mention it as a warnin,' thro' not a-likin' to be 'ard on that railway, as in course may make a mistake like the rest on us, but was certainly werry aggrawatin', for I took a cab as cost me a skillin', tho' under a mile, thro' sixpenny fares bein' done away, and when I got to Mary Ann's she'd

give me up and gone out a-shoppin' with 'er mother-in-law.

But as I were a-sayin' about that book, some'ow I got that interested in it as I couldn't lay it down, but felt that tired as I thought I'd finish it not in bed, as is a bad 'abit, but jest a-layin' on the outside, as would feel more rested with my things off.

So I lays there with the candle quite safe, and all the curtin's pinned back, and 'ad jest finished the fust wolume, and found as I'd got the third nearly 'arf tore out, so I gets up and puts my shawl on, and goes and asks Mrs. Barlow for it, as I could 'ear movin' about in the room under me.

She told me about its bein' lost, as were wexin' ; so back I goes, and lays down on the bed a-puzzlin' over that third wolume, as I couldn't make no sense out on, and jest where the willin were destroyed, thought as I smelt brimstone and fire-like.

I give a sniff and sets up, when a bust of smoke come from the bed, and if I 'adn't been a-layin' on the box of lucifers, as was all of a blaze in a instant.

I give a wiolent scream, as brought Mrs. Barlow up, tho' I'd managed to distinguish myself afore she come, leastways the bed, as I'd 'ad the presence of mind to roll on it, and then set up sudden, as put out the back of my night jacket, as were more scorched than burnt.

There wasn't no great 'arm done beyond

a-makin' old Barlow jump out of bed and throw up the winder, as he 'adn't done for years, a-'ollerin' thieves, but nobody didn't 'ear 'im thro' the back of the 'ouse lookin' on to a chapel. I must say as Mrs. Barlow forgot the lady next mornin' a-callin' me a fancified old fool a-readin' novels in bed, as is the fust time in my life as I was ever know'd by any one to think of doin' such a thing, and will be the last, tho' nothink 'adn't suffered, but a large 'ole the size of a cheese plate as were burnt in the quilt as were only patchwork, as Mrs. Barlow said 'er grandmother 'ad made for 'er, as I think always looks beggarly myself, leastways when not made of bits of silk, and this was only chintz and cotton thro' the old lady's 'usban' being a calender.

Brown, he come back next mornin', and in course sided with Mrs. Barlow, a-sayin' I did ought to be locked up.

I says, "It was all thro' you a-sayin' as you might be 'ome, as made me not want to go to sleep too soon, a-knowin' well as Mrs. Barlow would never 'ear you thro' 'er 'usband's snores, as must sleep like a church, as the sayin' is, as is like the roarin' sea, and I'm sure must lay on 'is back with 'is mouth open or never could do it."

Me and Brown took a walk out that mornin', for I wanted to go to the market and look out for a bit of dinner for the next day as were Sunday,

and a werry fine duck I got as is enough for two, with a fruit tart and vegetables; and arter we'd done our marketin' we walks down to the jetty, and who should we meet but Mr. and Mrs. Ardin, as did used to live oppersite us in South Lambeth, but 'ave moved up to Islington thro' a-findin' South Lambeth damp, as in course any place would be with a 'ouse built on the ground and no drains.

Well, there they was, and their two boys as were 'ome for the holidays, and little Matilda as 'ad growed out of knowledge, as the sayin' is.

So Mrs. Ardin says, "Law, Mrs. Brown, this is a bit of luck, as I 'adn't no idea as you was down 'ere, and only come myself last week thro' Matilda 'avin' outgrowed 'er strength, and persuaded Ardin to come down over night, as we might 'ave a sail to-day, and now you'll come too, won't you, like a dear?"

I says, "You'll escuse me, Mrs. Ardin, but not if it's a boat as you're a-goin' in," for I says, "dry land is quite good enough for me."

"Oh," says Mr. Ardin, "it's as smooth as glass, and you wouldn't never know as you were on it."

"Ah," I says, "for them as is good sailors it's all werry well, but a treacherous elephant to trust oneself on."

So Brown says, "Come, Martha, dont spile sport, and you needn't be afraid."

Says Ardin, "If you don't like it, we'll turn

back, and 'ave got a lot of lunch and bottled beer in a 'amper, and are only a-waitin' for some friends as is expected every hinstant, and you two will just make up the party, as 'ave wittles enough for a couple of dozen, for my old gal's a fust-rate caterer."

I didn't like to say "No," a-makin' oneself that disagreeable, and when they see me a-'esitatin', they all begun with "Oh! do, Mrs. Brown," till at last I give way, but says, "I shall want a extra shawl."

"Oh!" says Mrs. Ardin, "we've got lots to spare, as is in the boat a'ready."

Says Mr. Ardin, "Yes, let's get aboard, the others 'll be 'ere in a minnit."

So down we goes aboard the wessel, as it give me a bit of a turn a-gettin' into, for Brown and Ardin got in fust, and took 'old of my two 'ands, and pulled at me.

I says, "I can't come down that way."

"Well, then," says Mr. Ardin, "jump and I'll ketch you," and 'eld out 'is arms.

I give a jump, and come agin 'im with that violence as sent 'im a-flyin' down back'ards, as 'urt 'is back agin the side of the boat, and 'is 'at a-flyin' over the side, and werry nigh 'is wig too, as is beautiful curly, and a lovely brown.

I'm sure the clumsy old fools as Brown called



me was enough to prowoke a lamb, and I'd more than 'arf a mind to go ashore agin, but for Mr. Ardin bein' that good-natured over it, as said he'd got 'is cap in 'is pocket, and 'is 'at were a old one, so I says, "I'll stay, Mr. Ardin, if it's only for your sake," as said as he wished he'd see me twenty year ago, afore he throwed 'isself away, as was only 'is joke, for I've been married over thirty-five year, but it put Mrs. Ardin out, I could see, as said quite sharp, "A-don't make a hass of yourself afore the children," and she's got the whip, and thro' 'avin' of property from 'er father, as they do say were no better than a receiver of stolen goods, as "marine stores" is only a cloak for, all the world over.

We was a-waitin' and a-waitin' for them other parties to come, and that boat a-dancin' about, as were called the "Fire-fly," as were wrote on 'is stern, as Ardin called it, till I began to feel sick of all this wobblin', when young Charley Ardin 'ollers out, "'Ere they come!"

I looks up, and if I didn't see that Mrs. Liverstich, as did used to live next door to us, with 'er two higeous gals and 'er sister, as never a day didn't used to pass without our 'avin' a row, as begun with 'er a-bein' put out at me complainin' of 'er dust-'ole, as were enough to breed a fever, and blue-bottle flies as big as donkeys all over the place, and wrote to the parish; and if she didn't take and

throw her lobster-shells over into our garding, and when I throwed 'em back, abused me frightful, and shied the fryin'-pan, 'ot grease and all, at our cat, as missed 'im, and scalded one of 'er own gals, and then broke all my washus-winders on the sly, as was caught in the werry act, with the clothes-prop in 'er 'and, as Mrs. Challin caught 'old on the other end arter dark and give a drive with it, as caught 'er in the chest, and obliged to send for the doctor, with constant wars a-goin' on, till they all bolted in the night, as I could 'ave give information, but didn't like to act unneighbourly.

When she got into the boat, she give a glary look at me, and begun a-whisperin' to 'er daughters, as 'ad got two young fellers arter them, as was their bows, no doubt.

I didn't even move to 'em, thro' never 'avin' been friendly, and would 'ave got out, only didn't wish to 'ave no unpleasantness, so we was soon off, and werry agreeable the hair felt, tho' I couldn't abear the boat a-dippin' down a one side, as were all along of a sail as they would keep up.

I'm sure I wasn't one to keep up no unpleasantness between parties, so I says to Mrs. Liverstich, "It's a many years since we met, mum, as must be over seven."

She says, "I am not awares as we ever met afore, mum,"

I says, "When you lived out by Stepney Green."

She says, "Never."

I says, "Well, then, you're wonderful like, and so is your daughters, to a lady as did, in the same name."

"Ah," she says, "my 'usband's relations, no doubt."

'Owever she could 'ave the face to deny 'erself like that, with 'er broad red face a-starin' at me, with a wart one side of 'er nose as I could 'ave swore to 'er by, dead or alive.

I didn't say another word, but talked to Mrs. Ardin, as were a-tellin' me all about Matilda bein' ill, and Charley 'avin' the mumps as went thro' the 'ouse.

Not as they're what I calls a 'ealthy family, as constant colds in the end cannot be wholesome, and her boy Ned, with a 'ead big enough for six, and werry spindle legs, as 'ave quite outgrown 'is things.

We'd been out for more than a 'our with a pleasant breeze as I enjoyed, tho' Matilda Ardin were werry squeamish.

I 'eard Brown and Ardin a-talkin' about runnin' for Deal, when the boatman said, as the wind were a-shiftn', and the wessel didn't seem to go on, and the sail were a-floppin' all over the boat as they

pulled down a top on us all, and there we seemed for to stop.

I says, "Why don't we go on?"

They says, "There ain't no wind."

"Well," I says, "what's the use of stoppin' for it then?"

All them Liverstiches bust out a-larfin', and one of them young men says, "P'r'aps, mum, you'd be so good as to whistle for one."

I only give 'im a look, and begun to wish as they'd 'ave lunch, for I was a-gettin' downright peckish.

"We'll lunch off the Goodwins," says Mr. Ardin.

I says, "You don't mean the Goodwin Sands, I 'opes, as is certing death to any one as goes near 'em?"

"Don't talk rubbish, Martha," says Brown, and them two Liverstich gals bust out a-larfin' with them two fellers.

"Well," I says, "it don't make no difference 'ow I comes to my end, as 'ave no young family to think of, and if we are to go together, Brown, we may as well go by water as any other way; but," I says, "I don't want jeers to be my last moments from them as ain't my equals."

Says Mrs. Liverstich, flying out, "What do you

mean by such impidence? Why, you're no better than an old charewoman."

I says, "I may be all that, but," I says, "I ain't never bolted away from my 'ouse in debt to every one all round about, and left even the cats'-meat woman unsettled, as I paid 'er myself ninepence out of charity as were in that distress, thro' berryin' 'er 'usban' and babby the same week.

She says, "If you dare insinuate such things agin me, I'll ——"

I says, "I don't insinuate; I openly says as you're no better than a swindler, and come down with me to Stepney way, and I'll prove my words."

She says, "You're in liquor as usual."

I says, "You're a wile slanderer, with your couple of trollops of daughters to back you up."

Well, Brown and Ardin 'ad been standin' up at the end of the boat a-smokin', and didn't 'ear none of our row, but one of the Liverstich gals begun to scream, a-sayin' as I should upset the boat, jest because I got up thro' Matilda Ardin a-tellin' me as the corner of my shawl were in the water, so Brown give me a crack on the shoulder, and says, "Sit down, will yer?" as made all them Liverstiches bust out a-larfin'

They didn't keep it up long, for jest then there come up a squall of wind, and the sky lookin' that threatenin' as made us all jump.

I says, "Why not put into that land there?"

The sailor says, "The tide's a-comin' in, as'll soon cover 'em."

I says, "Cover what?"

He says, "The Goodwins."

I says, "If them's the Goodwins then we're lost, but," I says, "why not turn back?"

Says Brown, "Don't bother, the wind's dead agin us."

Jest then the wind it begun to blow, and the rain begun to pelt, and as to old Ardin, after all 'is braggism about the sea, and blowin' 'is baccy, and when 'is wife warned 'im not to bein' downright insultin' to 'er, and a-larfin' at 'er and the gal for feelin' queer, if he didn't take and be awful ill.

Mrs. Liverstich she begun to scream for brandy, and both 'er daughters turned dead faint, and them two young gents was awful bad over the side, though one on 'em 'ad said as he was more 'appy afloat than ashore.

The only partics as were not ill, was me, Brown and the sailors.

I was a-dyin' for somethink to eat and drink, tho' rather nauseous; but law bless you, the water rushed all over the side of that boat, and reg'lar swamped that 'amper, and then the water and the

wind seemed beatin' all round, and that little boat wasn't no protection agin the oshun waves as come up all round us.

At last I turned that hawful bad, as I says, "Brown, a little drop of brandy would soothe me, and I'd like to give a drop to that woman as I should like to die at peace with."

I couldn't say no more, for I thought as I were a-goin' fast; and the wind were a-'owlin' and the waves a-ruslin', and me a-longin' for death to give me ease.

I wanted for to shake 'ands with Mrs. Liverstich, but couldn't see 'er nowheres, and thought as p'r'aps she'd dropped overboard, and says to myself, "'Er miseries is over, as is a blessin' "

I never did know 'ow 'ard it could rain and thunder till I 'eard it that time, and there was them two sailors just like two postes with dust-men's 'ats tied under their chins, and coats as looked like ile-cloth.

Brown 'ad got one on as they'd lent 'im.

Poor Mr. Ardin was like a log at the bottom of the boat, with cap and wig both washed off.

As to me it was all as I could do to keep 'angin' on to a rope; and as to them Ardins lendin' me a shawl, why they 'adn't got enough for theirselves.

'Ow long we was a-beatin' about I don't know,

for I were that dead faint as life were a burden, and so we kep' on ever so long.

I says, "Brown, 'owever can you stop 'ere, and be drowned without a effort?"

He says, "We've been a-tryin' to make Ramsgate this three 'ours, as there ain't a chance on till the wind drops or changes."

I says, "Go back to Margate then."

He says, "We can't get round the foreland."

I says, "Then we're lost; but," I says, "give me a drop of somethink, for I'm a-sinkin' "

He says, "All the bottles in the 'amper is smashed, and the sailors 'as 'ad all the beer."

So I give myself up for lost, and set a-clingin' on for life, and all the rest dead beat.

I'd give up all 'opes when it 'ad got quite dark, and we came a-bump agin somethink as proved to be Ramsgate.

I got up in that boat, leastways I tried, but my limbs was froze, and two sailors 'ad to lift me out; not as I were anythink to Mrs. Liverstich and 'er daughters, as was one more dead than the other; and them young men sneaked off and left 'em as soon as ever we got ashore.

I thought as it were all 'over with Mrs. Ardin, for she kep' a-'eavin' long arter we was got ashore to a werry nice little 'ouse as Brown know'd on; the two boys picked up wonderful, and so did the



gal, but their ma were obligated to go to bed; but the rest on us 'ad tea in clothes as we borrowed, with eggs and bacon and chops, and by the time as Brown and Ardin 'ad got their pipes and grogs we was all right.

Ardin says, "I wonder how them Liverstiches 'ave got on?"

Says Matilda, "Oh, them two Almers will take care of 'em as is a-stoppin' at Ramsgate, and only come over to Margate for the day."

I says, "I don't believe as a couple of young sham tailors like them will look arter any one but theirselves."

Says Mr. Ardin, who were a-settin' with 'is 'ead tied up in a 'ankercher thro' 'avin' 'ad 'is 'ead of 'air swep' away by a wave, "I think as you're right, Mrs. Brown, not as I fancies the lot as my wife picked up at the libery; but," he says, "my cap is dry by this time, and as it's a fine night, we'll walk down to the boat, Brown, and see if they knows what's become on 'em."

So they did, as Brown were agreeable, and were out over a 'our, and found them three lone women a-settin' on the pier a-waitin' for them fellers, as 'ad went off a-promisin' to be back, as I spotted for a couple of sneaks the moment as I set eyes on 'em, as was both dressed out reg'lar slop-shop finery; and I ketched sight of their socks, as was

beastly dirty and full of 'oles at the 'eels; and talked as big as bull beef, as the sayin' is, about 'untin' and shootin', and kep' on about balls and pic-nics, as I should say 'adn't no more than what they know'd what to do with; and as to them Liverstich gals as was drawn out in four-and-six-penny muslings and cheap 'ats, they was disgraceful underneath, for I 'elped undo one on 'em when fust took faint.

I says, "Whatever 'ave you done with 'em, Brown?"

"Done with 'em," says he, "why, 'ad 'ard work to persuade 'em not to wait on the pier, and wouldn't 'ave no lodgin's, but 'ave gone back to Margate in the train."

"What," I says, "in all them wet clothes? They'll ketch their deaths."

"Well," he says, "that's their look out."

Poor Mrs. Ardin was werry shaky in the mornin' and a-breakin' 'er 'art over all 'er things being spilte, and as to that 'amper it had been destroyed down to the spoons and forks as luckily wasn't nothink but Britannier mettle; but what Ardin grieved over were 'is pint pot with a glass bottom, but the sea don't spare nothink, as is a devourin' monster, as the sayin' is.

We went back to Margate the next day afore church, jest in time to get somethink from the

cook-shop to make up, as the Ardins were a-comin' to dine, as put Mrs. Barlow out shockin', as certingly five do make a difference to dinner with only one duck provided, but it was all Brown's doin's as would 'ave 'em; and then we all went and 'ad tea with the Ardins thro' Mrs. Barlow's bad temper.

You should 'ave see the looks as I got from them Liverstiches, and so did the Ardins when we met 'em a-walkin' together, for I see a good deal of the Ardins that week as I agreed to stop, and Brown went up to town with Mr. Ardin on the Tuesday and come back the Friday agin.

A week don't seem nothink when you've pleasant company, and certingly Mrs. Ardin is fust-rate for goin' about tho' a 'asty temper.

I says to 'er wherever we goes, I pays my share, so there can't be no 'art-burnins' over a shillin' or two, and as to spongin' on any one, I couldn't do it was it ever so.

We went over to Minster, as is where the monks did used to be, as is now nothink better than tea-gardings, as shows what we may all come to afore we dies.

Then we went to the Reculverers as were built by two sisters as was both drowned in one another's arms, swallowed up by the sand thro' the tide a-comin' up unawares, and them two steeples is

meant for them a-lookin' at one another in their dyin' moments, as is werry nat'ral.

Not but what there's some sisters as would be werry glad to see the others drowned, for I'm sure Mrs. Ardin was a-tellin' me 'ow 'er own sister behaved over their father's money as 'ad married a second time ; and if that sister of 'ern didn't carry over 'er stepmother to get 'er to make the old gent alter 'is will, and would 'ave done it too propped up in bed with pillers, and 'er 'usban' a-guidin' the pen, only as luck would 'ave it, the candle were dropt out of the candlestick on to the bed and put out, and by the time as they got another light the old gentleman were insensible, so they 'ad to send off for the doctor, as never 'ad 'is senses no more till he were a 'appy release tho' much respected and deeply regretted as 'is tombstone says, as is always the case with them as dies worth money.

I'm sure it's no wonder any one bein' swallowed up by that sand as is that treacherous as you can't trust to, for I was as near lost myself one day near Margate thro' bein' on it.

I'd made up my mind one fine mornin' to 'ave a walk along the sands, so starts off with my campstool, in case as I should like a rest.

Well, I walks on and on enjoyin' the fresh hair, but not the clamberin' over them places, as was wet and slippery, but at last got to a werry dry spot,

and puts down my camp-stool for to rest, as I'd 'ard work to drop on to without upsettin'.

That camp-stool, as I 'adn't never used afore, was a werry low seat for me, and I felt as it were a-sinkin' into the sand with my weight, but werry gentle like.

Well, whether it were the glare of the sea or the 'eat I don't know, but I felt that drowsy as I couldn't keep my eyes open, so thinks as I'd get forty winks, as the sayin' is.

I 'adn't closed my eyes not two minnits, I'm sure, when I felt a crack on my bonnet and another on my back, as woke me up.

I looks round, and if there wasn't the sea come in close to me. I struggles to get up out of that camp-stool, as 'ad sunk down that deep in the sand as I couldn't get on to my feet.

Jest then I got another thump, and 'eard some one 'ollerin'

I reg'lar turned over on to the sand, and managed to get on to my feet, and looks about me, and up on the clift if there wasn't some fellers as 'ad been peltin' me.

I says, "If I gets at you, I'll pay you out."

They 'ollers, "Look out for the tide as is comin' in."

I looks round, and if I wasn't quite on a island with water all round.

I screams out for 'elp, and them parties says, "Make for them rocks;" and so I did, as was jest behind me, and that slimy and green as I couldn't keep my footin'.

They kep' on a-'ollerin' at me, but I couldn't make out what they said. I says, "I shall be lost," for I see as the water did used to come up much 'igher than my 'ead, by the marks on the cliffs, and it's a mercy as there weren't no wind, or the water 'd 'ave come up much sooner, and that violent as would 'ave drowned me in no time.

It were comin' on quite quiet, and me a-'ollerin' all the time, and afraid to look up, for things kep' a-fallin' over on to me.

There I stood ever so long, till I thought as I should 'ave died of fright, when a boat come round the corner with two men, jest as the water were up to my feet.

I says to the men, "Why ever did you leave me 'ere to perish like this?"

One of 'em says, "There wasn't water enough to float the boat round afore."

I'm sure the bruises I got a-gettin' into that boat was frightful, but glad I was to get safe to land, and cost me five shillin's for the boat, and lost my camp-stool, as cost money, and felt quite ill for days thro' the shock, so you'll never ketch me on them sands agin, as no wonder they calls 'em

reculverers, for nobody as sunk wouldn't ever get out of 'em agin alive.

We should 'ave 'ad a werry pleasant day at them reculverers, but for Mrs. Barlow a-losin' her temper with 'er boy Ned, as certingly was werry impident, but then it's 'er own fault, as I told 'er, for she gives way to 'im in everythink; but law bless you, I'd better 'ave 'eld my tongue, for she told me to mind my own business, and boxed Matilda's ears for sayin' as Ned were spilte, and then 'ad the 'isterics in the middle of dinner, 'cos Ned wouldn't kiss 'er and make it up; and then Sam, as is the other boy, he turned dead sulky over a donkey-ride, and poor Matilda got sich a sick 'eadache as I 'ad to 'old 'er up all the way 'ome in the carriage, and got no thanks, for Mrs. Ardin, if she didn't say as they would never 'ave quarrelled but for strangers a-interferin', and told me not to put my oar in, when I said as they did ought to put Matilda's feet in 'ot water afore goin' to bed.

I see the poor gal were downright ill, and so she turned out, for Mrs. Ardin 'ad to send to me that werry night, and ask my pardin, for the fever were that 'igh as she didn't know what it might turn to.

If ever I was in a 'ouse with two young limbs, it was them young Ardins, as their bluchers was never out of the passage, a-stompin' like mad, and

a-worretin' their mother for money, as let 'em 'ave anythink for a quiet life, and got a-smokin' in the 'eat, and come 'ome like a couple of dead boys, as I smelt 'em out in a instant, tho' she thought it were the gastrick fever, the same as the gal 'ad a touch on.

"But," she says to me, "whatever you do don't tell Ardin as they've been smokin', as tho' a good father would 'arf kill 'em, as is agin 'is orders, and brings 'em up werry strick to their chapel."

I says, "He don't go werry often 'isself."

"Oh," she says, "he do in winter of a evenin' ; but makes the boys stick to it reg'lar summer and winter."

I says, "Indeed, then you look out as they don't cut it when they're a year or two older."

She says, "It would be their father's death."

"Well," I says, "he manages to live thro' not a-goin' werry often 'isself, so I don't think as that would kill 'im ;" for I 'adn't no patience with sich rubbish a-forcin' the boys to go and a-keepin' out on it 'isself 'cos it was too 'ot and crowded at the sea-side, and was a-idiin' and a-smokin' all the mornin', as in course young people is sharp enough to see thro' with 'arf a eye.

When Ardin come back on the Friday he was werry much put out about the gal bein' unwell, a-layin' it all to 'is wife for the gal is 'is pet, and



took and give both the boys a larrapin' the next mornin' thro' findin' a pipe in their bed-room, as was only 'is temper and didn't do no good. We'd agreed as we'd all go a pic-nic that Saturday thro' bein' my last day, and it was werry near my last day, let alone goin' 'ome on Monday.

We'd engaged a wan so as to 'ave lots of room for everybody and everythink, as I'd asked Mrs. Barlow for to go along with us, as were a charity, for she never did get a chance of a bit of fresh hair, so she 'umbugged old Barlow some'ow and got a party as she'd know'd for years to come and look arter 'im, and was free thro' 'er other lodgers a-goin' the day afore and a fresh lot a-comin' in on Monday, as were a-goin' to 'ave our 'partments as well.

That gal Matilda were not fit to go, and so I told both father and mother, as I 'eard 'em call me a old croaker for my pains behind my back, and let the gal 'ave 'er own way tho' better at 'ome.

Mrs. Ardin's married sister in the name of Royston, as 'er 'usban' had been a sojer, they was a-goin' too, and a werry nice wan we 'ad, and jest on twelve we started as were a-goin' to a place inland, 'avin' 'ad quite enough of the sea.

We'd got nicely along the road ever so far, when I says to Mrs. Ardin, "Wherever 'ave they put the basket with the things in?" a-meanin' the heat-ables.

"Oh," she says, "don't fidget, that's a dear, they're up in front."

I says, "All right," and on we goes, a-stoppin' to bait the 'osses once, as it were some miles we was a-goin' to dine, at a pretty spot on the road to Canterbury as we was to wisit fust and come back to dinner.

I must say I relished a glass of ale on the road, and we got on to Canterbury in nice time, and a noble church we see as were built by the Romans, and shows the spot where one on 'em was murdered savage a Christmas Eve, as was pretty behaviour in a church, but come 'ome to that king as ordered it, for he were lashed to bits at the werry spot and serve 'im right too, a willin'.

The church is werry large, and must be a great essertion for any one to preach in it, and I'm sure it can't be no use their preachin' for nobody can't hear nothink but the orgin, and the winders is lovely all. painted, and i'm sur' it's a pity as the Romans didn't build more churches while they was about it, and so I says to Mr. Ardin as is always down on the Church, as said that there did used to be lots jest as fine as was pulled down and sold for rubbish, as was wicked waste, for now they're a-'ollerin' out for more churches, and I'm sure there's been lots built in my time, as can jest remember when a new church were looked on as downright wonderful

By the time as we'd looked over that church as 'adn't got none of them lovely things as they shows in the big church with the funny name in Paris, as I wouldn't believe it were called "Notter Dam" till the French told me so theirselves, as looked werry solemn, and parties was a-sayin' their prayers in, as they don't believe in at Canterbury, for there wasn't nobody there but only the party as showed us over, as talked that fast as I could not for the life of me make out what he was a-sayin', and another old man as were a-settin' on a bench near the door a-noddin'

By the time as we'd see it all the wan were ready, and we was drove back three miles to where we was goin' to 'ave our wittles; and when we got there, if they 'adn't left the prowisions behind.

I says to Mrs. Ardin, "I told you so."

She says, "Never."

I says, "I did, when I asked where they'd put the basket, and you told me not to fidget."

She says, "You might 'ave looked for yourself."

I says, "So I did, and couldn't see it, and that's why I asked you."

"Whatever was the use of askin' when you see it wasn't there?" says Mr. Ardin, as were ruffled thro' 'unger.

"Oh," says Brown, "that's my wife all over, as any one would think were a born idjot."

"Never mind," says Ardin, "they'll give us somethink at the public where the 'osses is a-baitin'," as were only jest round the corner.

So off 'im and Brown went a-foragin', as they called it, and if that Mrs. Ardin didn't turn on me and say as I never meant to bring the things, and said as I begrudged the cold lamb and pigeon pie as I'd provided.

Mrs. Barlow, she'd got sich a bad sick 'eadache, as she said were the hair, not bein' used to it; but I think was that ale as she'd 'ad three glasses on with nothink but a empty stomick. Mrs. Royston kep' a-sayin' as she wished she'd never come, and Royston only kep' on a-makin' unearthly noises as they said were 'is as'ma, but in my opinion thro' 'is 'avin' no roof to 'is mouth as 'ad been shot away in the wars over there, 'is wife said, tho' I don't see 'ow it could 'ave been shot off and 'ave left 'is 'ead on.

When Brown and Ardin come back they could get nothink but bread and cheese with some cow-cumbers and onions and a can of ale, as we was to eat under some trees.

The row as Mrs. Ardin made over it I never did, a-sayin' as she 'adn't the stomach of a cow to eat such stuff.

I says, "Oh, rubbish, better eat that than starve, as Queen Charlotte said when they told 'er as thousands was a-dyin' of want."

Mrs. Ardin says, "It may suit you, but don't suit me and my sister, as 'ave both been brought up genteel."

I thought of the marine store shop in Gravel Lane, and couldn't keep my countenance 'ardly, for I know'd as their own aunt 'ad a apple-stall at the corner of that same street, and none the worse for that in my opinion, tho' no doubt 'ave caused the death of thousands with her win'falls.

I didn't say nothink, but made the best on it, tho' I can't say as I cares much about bread and cheese as a meal, as will digest everythink but itself, as the sayin' is; and certingly brought Tommy Travers thro' that illness as he got thro' eatin' over two pound of cherries, and a-swallerin' the stones in 'is 'urry, for fear of bein' found out, as 'ad took 'em on the sly with 'is mother's back turned as were a-goin' to make a pie, and 'ad only stepped out for 'arf-a-quartern of flour, a-leavin' the cherries on the table; and when she come back found the cherries all gone, and the boy black in the face on the flat of 'is back a-kickin' for life, as they poked the cheese down 'is throat with the 'andle of a knife, but a narrer squeak as ever any one 'ad in this world.

We was a-settin' werry quiet a-takin' of our refreshments, when I says, "Dear me, what a many waspscs there is about," as I'm always afraid on

where beer's about, thro' their bein' such creaturs to get into the glass, and sting you unawares in drinkin'.

"Yes," says Mr. Ardin, "there must be a nest near I should say."

I says, "Oh, indeed," thro' not a-knowin' much about their ways. I says, "There's a lot on 'em there," and I pints with my parrysole to a 'ole in the bank as waspses was a-flyin' in and out on; and jest then that dratted boy Sam come a-runnin' up, a-sayin' as he found a musheroon, and ketched 'is foot in somethink and come slap agin me, and made me tumble for'ard with my parrysole, as went into that 'ole in the bank, and out come the waspses by the 'undreds. Up I jumps and give a rush back'ards, and set down on all the bread and cheese, upsettin' the beer, and give old Ardin sich a back-'ander jest as he were a-drinkin', and throw'd 'im over agin 'is wife, as rolled over Matilda; and there was all the waspses attackin' on us, as Royston 'ad aggrawated wuss by 'ittin' at 'em with a umbreller.

I never did 'ear sich screams as they all set up, as brought the people from all round to see what was the matter.

I jumps about thro' feelin' I was stung, and 'ollers out, "Run for your lives!" and so we did all run, with the waspses arter us like fury, and them fools as come to look on a-shoutin' with their unfeelin' larfter.

It was ever so long afore we got away from them waspses, and then I says, "Wherever's Mrs. Barlow?" and if she wasn't left behind, and layin' on the bank.

I says, "She'll be devoured alive."

Says Mrs. Ardin, "And so we all might 'ave been, and all thro' you, you wicked, spiteful woman, as did it for the purpose.'

I says, "Did what?"

"Why," she says, "stirred up them waspses."

I says, "It was your own cub of a boy as pushed agin me."

"Oh," she says, "Mrs. Brown, whatever you do don't tell no falsehoods, and lay it to that poor child."

Brown, he'd walked away to 'ave 'is pipe, as soon as he'd 'ad a mouthful of bread and cheese, and jest then come back as the good woman 'ad come out of the public-'ouse with the blue-bag, and dabbed all our stings with it, as was werry much stung about the face, specially Mrs. Ardin and her sister. So Brown he thought we'd been a-fightin' nat'rally.

As for Mrs. Barlow, she crawled up lookin' for all the world like a ghost with a 'eadache, and 'adn't been stung a bit thro' a-layin' quiet, as Brown said we shouldn't none of us 'ave been if we'd let the waspses alone.

There wasn't no pacifyin' Mrs. Ardin, and as to Royston he'd 'ave been downright abusive, only 'avin' no roof to 'is mouth he couldn't espress 'is low lived langwidge.

Brown 'ad the 'osses put to at once, and 'ome we went, a nice set of hobjecs, in the dead sulks. I got out at our place, and 'ad to help put Mrs. Barlow to bed, as got awful bad a-goin' 'ome; and if that party as 'ad been left at 'ome to take care of old Barlow 'adn't give the basket of prowisions as she see afore we was out of the street to a man as promised to run arter us with it, and in course lewanted with the lot.

I really was not sorry as we was goin' 'ome Monday, for tho' Mrs. Ardin and me shook 'ands as Christians should Sunday evenin', yet I never could feel like a friend to 'er no more, arter the things as she 'ad said to me before my face, and no doubt behind my back would call me everythink but a lady.

We was a-goin' by the train 'ome as leaves about two, and when I come to look at my box, I see it would never 'old together to the station, so I goes out early and buys a new one, as were a strong black one, as would 'old everythink, and I packed my smuggled tea and brandy at the bottom, a-'rappin' 'em up in my Chiny crape shawl.

We got up to town all werry well, and at London



Bridge Brown put me in a cab with the things, as he wanted to go and see arter 'is aunt alone, as was werry bad, thro' me not a-speakin' to none of 'er family, close agin St. George's Church.

I 'ad the carpet bag and a lot of parcels in the cab, and 'ad put my box on the top, and just arter we got out of the station, the cabman pulled up sudden, jumps off 'is box, and begins a-runnin' down a side street arter a man as was a-cuttin' away with my box on 'is 'ead, as he pitched down in the middle of the road, when he found as the cabby were on to 'im.

I never was more frightened, for the cab 'ad stopped in the middle of the street, and 'busses and carts was a-comin' every way, and jest as I see the feller throw the box down off 'is 'ead, somethink a-passin' knocked up agin my cab and set the 'oss off. I 'ollers "Woe" as loud as ever I could thro' the front winder, as only seemed to frighten 'im more, and on he rushed till he come agin a lamp-post, jest as I'd got the door open to jump out, as was consequentially tore off its 'inges in a instant.

Up come a crowd, as says, "Get out, mvm, for the wheel's off."

"Come into the doctor's shop," says a old lady, "for I'm sure you must be dreadful shook."

I says, "I ain't 'urt."

"Get out," says another, and so I did, and they 'urries me into the doctor's.

I says, "I don't want no doctors, thank you," and turns back to the cab, as they'd been and cleaned everythink out on by the other door.

Up comes a perliceman. I says, "Whero's my property took to?"

He says, "'Ow should I know?"

I says, "Some one's been and took it out of the cab, and I must 'ave it."

Well, the cabman he come up a cussin' and a-swearin' like a powder maggyseer, and a boy as was a-carryin' my box, as was all mud, and the corner broke in.

Says the perliceman, "I've got your number, my man, as will 'ear more of this a-leavin' your 'oss like that."

He says, "A chap 'ad cut the lady's box off."

He says, "You couldn't 'ave 'ad it chained proper."

He says, "I've broke my chain this mornin' "

"Ah," says the perliceman, "that's where it is."

I says, "And might 'ave been my death, with all the rest of my things stole in broad daylight."

"Well," says the cabman, "the next box as is stole off my cab I'll let it go, as am a poor man with a wife in the 'ospital, but 'ever mind."

I says, "Perliceman, whatever am I to do?"

He says, "Go 'ome, and if you likes to give me a description of the property as you've lost, I'll do my best to get it back for you."

I says, "There's a carpet bag and three paper parcels, with a large basket; but I can't remember a 'undredth part of the things as was in 'em; but," I says, "let me get out of this crowd whatever you do." So he got me another cab, and I give 'im my address, and 'ome I went, as Brown 'ad got there fust and couldn't think whatever 'ad become on me, and nearly frightened poor Mrs. Challin to death to see 'im walk in all alone in a mournin' 'at-band, nat'rally thinkin' as I'd been took sudden, as he'd put on for 'is aunt as 'ad died three nights afore quite unprepared for thro' them all a-thinkin' 'er better, as we did ought to 'ave got the letter Sunday mornin'—not as I believe they ever wrote, tho' I don't think as that Mrs. Barlow would forward it not to save my life thro' me 'avin' words with 'er at settlin', for I never did see sich a bill as she brought me in for insetterrors, and to say as we'd used 'arf-a-crown's worth of 'er castors, and a shillin' for blackin' as wore prunella shoes myself, and wanted to charge for black-lead as I wouldn't stand, and could 'ave swore I'd paid for them things from the baker's as they come in; and to think as she should 'ave the face to say I'd 'ad a dozen twists as 'ave but

a poor appetite for bread at all times! When I come to undo my box there was all my things steeped in brandy with the bottle broke, and I'm sure when I set down to my tea and a nice cooked chop as I enjoyed, I felt more myself, not as ever I 'ad any 'opes of 'earin' of my things any more, as was all my raffles and some eggs and fresh butter as I'd bought in the market that mornin'; but it might 'ave been wuss, for there's many as goes to the sea-side and meets their ends there thro' accidents as will 'appen in the best regulated families, as the sayin' is, tho' I must say it's my opinion as the sea don't suit my complaint, tho' I'm sure as I give it every chance, for we was there 'ard on five weeks, as it don't do for to go only for a week or so, as it requires time for the constitution to give in to it.

The perliceman he come once or twice over them things as there wasn't no tidin's on, and that cabman he come with sich a tale about 'is wife as were a-dyin', and leavin' 'im with three on 'is 'ands, that Brown give 'im a sov'rin, for you see we come into a tidy bit of property from the old lady as they buried in plumes at Nunhead, tho' I did not foller 'er myself, as will make us that well off as we needn't think of a pound or so.

Not as ever I wants to put on no hairs, nor set myself up for a swell, as would only prove a larfin' stock; and tho' we made it up with them other

relations as thought they'd got all the swag, as the sayin' is, yet I could see was all envy and 'atred i' their 'arts when they come to tea, and went c a-sayin' 'ow wonderful well I'd wore thro' not 'avin' set eyes on me over twenty year, as is a good lump out of any one's life; not but what Mrs. Archbut was a fine woman, as is Brown's fust cousin by the mother's side, as were own sister the old lady we'd jest berried, tho' too many ringlets for me and no family, and 'im in the buildin' line a-rollin' in money, and yet put out at Brown gettin' the property as were 'is rights, for, accordin' to 'is grandfather's will, it was to come to 'im when the last daughter was dead, as there 'ad been five on 'em and all fine women, as you could tell to look at Brown, as I don't mind a-sayin' is the 'an'somest man in London, let the next be wherever you may find 'im; and all I cares about is as we may 'ave 'ealth to enjoy it sensible, for tho' both the gals is married well and Joe a-doin' well over there, they won't be none the wuss for a little somethink comin' in by and by when we're dead and gone.

THE END.

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